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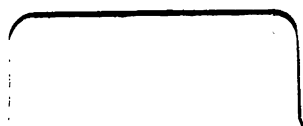
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THE SPIRITUAL WORLD AND
OUR CHILDREN THERE

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THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

AND

OUR CHILDREN THERE

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF

"HEAVENLY BLESSEDNESS; WHAT IT IS, AND HOW ATTAINED," ETC.

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THE NATURE OF SPIRIT AND OF
MAN AS A SPIRITUAL BEING

LECTURE I.

THE NATURE OF SPIRIT, AND OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD.

I INVITE your attention to a subject which must interest every one who believes in the possibility even of a life after this, and of another world in which we are to dwell for ever. Nothing can explain the indifference to the great realities of the future, of those who have any belief in Christianity, but the conviction that it is impossible to know anything concerning spiritual beings and a spiritual world beyond the bare fact of their existence. How can an intelligent being remain indifferent to a subject of such infinite importance, if he believes in its reality? If any one of you knew that you must sooner or later remove to some remote country, to spend the remainder of your life there, and that you might be called upon at any moment to go, you could not remain indifferent to the nature of the country, and to your own situation when you arrived there. You would lose no opportunity for personal inquiry ; you would read every book you could procure, that treated upon the subject ; you would exhaust all the means in your power to learn where you were going, and what your condition would be when you had reached your new home. How,

then, can any one who believes in the existence of a spiritual world, and who sees one after another of those whom he knows and loves—beings as dear to him as his own life—daily passing away, and who knows that he must soon follow them ;—how can a rational being, with such a belief, be indifferent to the nature of that world, and to the condition of its inhabitants? It is impossible to account for this general unconcern upon any other supposition than the prevalent opinion, that nothing definite and certain can be known about it.

There is conclusive evidence that this has long been, and is now, the state of the Christian world upon this subject. We are even told that it is not best for us to know anything about the world that lies upon the other side of the grave; that the Lord did not intend to have us know anything definite about it. But all inquiries and all thoughts upon a subject so vital to our eternal interests cannot be suppressed, even by those whose doctrines teach them that such knowledge is impossible. Accordingly, we have many theories and speculations; but they are so vague, so various and contradictory, that they keep the mind in perpetual doubt, and finally defeat the end for which they were instituted. They confirm the mind still more strongly in the belief that nothing can be known about the future life, beyond the bare fact of its existence; and multitudes go still further—they deny its existence, and they now live as though there was no world and no life but this.

It was this general ignorance of the nature, and this practical denial of the existence, of a real spiritual world, and of a substantial conscious spiritual life for

man, that rendered a New Dispensation of truth necessary. All knowledge, and consequently all practical belief in the immortality of man, and in the existence of a spiritual world, had nearly died out from the minds of men, and there were no means in the church to reinstate it. It required light from above. Open communication with that world, and with those who had passed into it, was necessary before the reality of its existence could be brought home to the minds of men with convincing power. This is one of the special uses which the New Church will perform for humanity. It is one of the distinguishing features of this Church that it has a clear and logical doctrine upon this subject. It has disclosures to make which are consistent with themselves, with enlightened reason, and with the Sacred Scriptures; disclosures which satisfy all the wants of those who accept them, and which are generally acknowledged to be beautiful and consolatory, even by those who do not fully assent to their truth. It is to these disclosures that I invite your attention at present. I propose to give the answer of the New Church to the following questions: I. What is Spirit? II. What is the Spiritual World? III. Where is it? IV. What are its relations to this world?

I. What is Spirit? I use the term spirit in the same sense I would use the corresponding term matter, in the question, What is matter? This is a primary and most important question, and upon its correct answer depends all distinct and true knowledge concerning the spiritual world.

Our doctrines teach us clearly and explicitly that spirit is a *substance*, and must necessarily have a *form*.

There are material substances and spiritual substances, entirely distinct from each other. Matter is not spirit, and spirit is not matter; but both are real substances. As this is a most important point, and one that is contrary to common opinion, it is worthy of as clear statement and elucidation as possible.

And, first, let us get a clear idea of what we mean by *substance*. I do not use the term in any metaphysical sense. I use it in the common meaning as the material out of which, or from which, any being, existence, or entity is formed. Every material thing is made out of some material substance. The potter makes his vessels of the substance we call clay. The carpenter builds houses, and forms various material objects, out of the substance we call wood. Ice is formed from the substance we call water, and water from the substance we call gas. The earth itself is probably formed of a gaseous substance. The material body is organized of material substances of various kinds.

In the same sense, we mean that spirit is a substance, and that every spiritual existence is formed from some spiritual substance. All Christians acknowledge that angels are spirits; if they are, they are formed of spiritual substances. Man is a spirit as to one part of his nature, and that part is formed of spiritual substances. If there is a spiritual world distinct from the material world, that world and all things in it must be formed of spiritual substances. But if we are asked what a spiritual substance is *in itself*, we cannot tell. It is just as impossible, however, to form any idea of what a material substance is in itself. Who can tell what clay, or wood, or iron, or water, or gas, is in itself? Our knowledge of everything is

limited by its relations to us ; by its effects upon us. We are no more called upon to define what spirit is in itself, than we are to define what matter is in itself. It is impossible to do either. It is no objection, therefore, to the doctrine that there are distinct spiritual substances, that we cannot define what they are in themselves. All that we can know of any substance, material or spiritual, is the necessary conditions of existence, and the qualities that inhere in it as their subject ; and we can learn these qualities only from the relation of their subjects to us. The blind man can form no true idea of the nature of light, for it has no relation to him. He has no organism to be affected by it ; but if you tell him that there is no luminous body, and no substance which is the subject of light, he can come to no other just conclusion than that there is no such existence or entity as light. We can say the same of spirit, though it is not appreciable by any of the senses.

We may now advance a step further, and say that no existence is possible without a form. If there is any such existence, or being, or entity, as a spirit, it must have substance and form ; for there can be no substance without a form. It is impossible for the mind to conceive of anything without form. Let any one try to conceive of such a material thing, and he will see how absurd it is. The very idea of conception implies form. An idea is an image ; an idea, then, is a form. Spirit as well as matter, therefore, must have substance and form, for they are the two factors which are essential to any existence, or to the conception of any being or thing. Spirit is the correlative, not the negation of matter.

Here is the point in which philosophers and Christians have made the mistake, fatal not only to all *true* knowledge, but to *all* knowledge of spirit. It has generally been assumed that the only way to arrive at a true idea of spirit, was to regard it as the opposite of matter in every respect. They reason in this way. Matter has form, therefore spirit has none. Matter has substance, therefore spirit has none. In this way they deny to spirit all possible modes of existence. The Christian stops here, and ends by simply affirming its existence, but denies that we can know anything more about it. But many push this destructive logic a step further, and deny the existence of spirit altogether. And this is the logical result, for denial can never end in anything but negation and nothing. This is inevitable; and the Christian escapes this conclusion only by stopping before he reaches it. We must admit that there is a spiritual substance, and that this substance has form, or we must deny the existence of spirit altogether. No other conclusion is possible.

But to make the proof as strong and clear as possible, let us assume that there is a spiritual world, and that there are spiritual beings; but deny that there is a spiritual substance, and see to what absurdities it will lead us. What is a world? What is the meaning of the word world? Has not the world form? Is it not made up of innumerable objects, all of which have form—all of which are composed of material substances? Suppose you take away from this world all its forms and substances, would there be any world left? There would be nothing left. Is it not just as absurd to say that there is a spiritual world, while you

deny to it any substance or form? You would not hesitate a moment to pronounce a man foolish, or insane, who should deny that there could be any such material substance or form as wood, and then begin to describe a tree; or who should ridicule the possibility of the existence of water, and then proceed to expatiate on the nature and beauties of a river, or the grandeur of the ocean. But are not all those guilty of this absurdity who talk of heaven as a real place; who think of the Lord as seated on a throne, surrounded by saints and angels, dressed in white robes, wearing golden crowns, and playing on golden harps, and making "heaven's wide arches ring" with their hallelujahs; or writhing in the torments of hell, and filling the dreary abodes of the lost with lamentation and woe? Christians delight to sing—

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand drest in living green,"

and yet, according to the theory, they have no substance and no form. What kind of a field would that be which had no substance and no form? How could it be "drest in living green?" Christians often talk of meeting their friends and loved ones who have gone before. But how can two beings without form or substance, beings which are no beings, meet? How could they recognise each other? What can be more absurd than such an idea? Christians think of the Lord as seated on a throne, with the Redeemer at His right hand; and yet they declare in doctrine that "He is a being without body, parts, or passions," and think it derogatory to His nature to attribute to Him any form. But if He has no form and no substance, He

has no existence. Instead of gaining any worthy conception of Him by denying Him substance and form, they, doctrinally, annihilate Him. Into such difficulties, contradictions, and absurdities, the mind is led by trying to do that which is impossible. We conclude, therefore, that if spirit has any existence, it must be a substance and have a form.

The mind has the power of conceiving of qualities without, or abstracted from their subjects. But those qualities do not and cannot exist separate from their subjects. We can conceive of sweetness; but sweetness has no existence apart from some substance that is sweet. We can conceive of strength; but strength has no existence apart from some being or thing that exercises it. There is no abstract power. We can conceive of love, goodness, and truth, but they are not abstractions; they have no existence but in their subjects. But, because we can conceive of them without connecting them with any subject, men have been insensibly led to regard them as distinct and independent existences. In this way the mind and spirit, and all our intellectual qualities, have come to be regarded as abstractions without form or substance, and yet as real existences. But if we apply the same process of reasoning to the body or to any material thing, we shall see its absurdity at once. Take the power of steam, for example. We can conceive of the power abstracted from the steam itself. The engineer talks and reasons about its existence, nature, quantity, and application, as though it was a distinct existence; and if the steam itself was not appreciable by any of the senses, we might come to regard it as a distinct thing, without any substance or form. But

we know that it is impossible to abstract the power from the steam, and say here is the power, and there is the steam. The power is the force with which the steam expands. Where there is no steam there is no power. They cannot be separated in fact. The same principle applies to all qualities, mental and spiritual. There can be no thought, affection, goodness, or quality of any kind, without some subject in which these qualities reside; and those qualities cannot exist separate and distinct from their subjects. All qualities are essentially the forms, activities, and relations of their subjects. If there is no spiritual substance and form, there can, therefore, be no spiritual qualities. While, therefore, we can see how the mind is led away to regard an abstraction as a reality, and to conceive of it as existing without any form, we can see, at the same time, the utter impossibility of such an existence.

From whatever point of view we regard the subject, therefore, we come back to the conclusion that spirit must be a substance, and have a form. The doctrines of the New Church are, therefore, in harmony with analogy, necessity, and reason, in declaring that *spirit is a substance*, and has forms, qualities, modes, and established laws of existence relatively the same as matter.

II. Our second question is: What is the Spiritual World? Having established the truth that there must be a spiritual substance, if there is any distinct spiritual existence, everything necessary to constitute a distinct spiritual world and substantial spiritual beings follows as a necessary consequence. For if a

material world can be formed out of material substances, surely it is not illogical to infer that a spiritual world, composed of objects as numerous and various in quality, can be formed out of spiritual substances. Indeed, it would be quite absurd to infer the contrary.

Consequently, our doctrines teach us that spiritual substances bear the same relations to each other that material substances do. They are solid, and fluid, and aeriform. The solids exist in every possible variety that material solids do. There are spiritual earths, rocks, and metals, as gold, silver, and iron, in every variety of quality and form. Indeed, there is a perfect mineral kingdom formed of spiritual substances. These substances are also organized into vegetable and animal forms. There is also, then, a vegetable and an animal kingdom, based upon the mineral kingdom, and bearing the same relations to it that the same kingdoms do to the mineral kingdom in this world. The spiritual earth is diversified with mountains, hills, valleys, rivers, and smaller streams, and out of this earth, grass, and flowers, shrubs and trees of every kind, grow, relatively the same as in this world. Birds fly in the air, and animals walk upon the earth, and the spiritual beings who dwell there have their habitations, and gardens, and fields. They look out upon beautiful landscapes, and look up to the heavens above them. The earth is as solid and firm to their tread as this is to ours. And the spiritual objects are hard and soft, solid and fluid, cold and hot, light and heavy, rough and smooth, transparent and opaque, and of every conceivable form and colour and quality, that objects have in this

world. And there are many forms and qualities besides, that cannot exist in matter, because it is so gross and dead compared with spiritual substances.

Now it may be, and sometimes is, objected to this view of the spiritual world, that it is only materializing it; attributing to it those qualities which this world possesses; and instead of a spiritual world, by this process of reasoning, it is said we only get another material world. This might be true, if spiritual substances and objects had no other qualities than material objects. But, as we shall see hereafter, they have many qualities impossible to material objects, and they are altogether superior, and pre-eminently excellent in every respect, in their forms, origin, and relations, to the inhabitants who dwell in that world.

But let us suppose that there is a spiritual world, which has nothing in common with this world, not even substance and form, and see what will be the result. We can do nothing more than affirm that there is such a world; we can have no idea of it. We cannot conceive it under any form, or mode, for by the supposition it has none. It has no mountains, hills, earth, rivers; no sun, no light, no atmosphere; nothing in common with this world. What is it, then? Nothing. It is no *world*; for the very idea of a world presupposes substance, and form, and objects. Thus we cannot go beyond the simple affirmation of the existence of such a world. We cannot form any idea of it; for by the supposition it has no *form*, it has nothing in common with this world; and we even deny its existence by the very conditions of our affirmation. It is this absurdity of denying to the

spiritual world every possible mode and form of existence, and then trying to conceive it or think upon it, that has resulted in such doubt and practical denial of its reality, and of the possibility of spirits being really human beings, having a complete human form. There can be no middle ground between the practical denial of any substantial spiritual world and the acknowledgment that it must be similar in general form and relations to this world. If we take any step beyond a simple affirmation of the existence of spirit under conditions of which we can know nothing, we must assert that it is a substance and form; and all that is necessary to constitute a world follows, by a logical necessity.

In affirming, therefore, that there are spiritual substances and forms, and a spiritual world similar to this in general appearance, though superior to it in every quality, we do no violence to any analogy, we contravene no law of reason. We act also in perfect accordance with revelation; for the whole Bible implies the reality and substantial nature of the spiritual world; and we come to a conclusion which we cannot possibly avoid, without violating all known laws of reason and existence.

Our answer to the Second Question, then—What is the Spiritual World?—is this: *It is a real world, composed of all the forms that are necessary to constitute a world.* It is objective to the senses of those who dwell in it, and far more distinct, substantial, and real to them than this world is to us. And yet it is not material, but is as distinct from every form of matter, as the soul is from the body.

III. Having determined the possibility of a real spiritual world, our next question is, Where is that world? There is a common and very remarkable absurdity frequently taught upon this subject. There is the implied denial that there can be any real spiritual world; and then an assertion that it is somewhere above us in the stars, or, it may be, in some central sun. I presume most persons think of heaven as above them, somewhere in the realms of space. But, if we should visit every planet and sun in the material universe, we should not find the spiritual world. We should be no nearer to it than we are now. If it is some central sun, it is material and not spiritual. If it is in any particular place in the realms of space, it must be material and not spiritual. Where, then, is it?

It is here; and it is everywhere around and within the material universe. We are in the spiritual world now, though we are not conscious of it. Our doctrines affirm that there are as many spiritual worlds as there are material worlds, and that the spiritual world corresponding to each planet is around it. So that every human being in any world can say, The spiritual world is *here*.

Why then, it may be asked, can we not see it? I answer, we have the best of evidence that multitudes have seen it. Many instances are given in the Bible of persons who saw it while they were still in this world, and they have told us what they saw. In nearly all the instances recorded in the Bible, you will find it is said the persons were "in the spirit," or had their "eyes opened." These could not have been their natural eyes, for they were open before. They

must have been their spiritual eyes. For it requires a spiritual eye to see a spiritual object.

In our ordinary state, the spiritual senses are closed, and we have no consciousness from the senses of any world but the material. And a little reflection will show us that it is wisely ordered that it is so. It would be impossible for us to perform our duties in this world, if we had constant, open vision of the spiritual world. We should be distracted, and our natural life destroyed by it.

But that it is impossible for us to be in the spiritual world, and yet not be conscious of it, is evident from many analogous examples. Our unconsciousness of anything is no proof of its non-existence. The man who has become blind by the formation of a film over his eyes, is in a world of light the same as before, but he is not conscious of it, and he cannot be until his blindness is cured. He does not need to go anywhere to get into it. If he should visit every planet and sun in the universe, he would be no nearer the world of light. It is all around him, like the atmosphere, but he can only be introduced into it by the removal of the veil which obstructs the light. Couch his eyes, and he can see. The organism of the eye is the divine method of introducing men into the world of light. In the same way a man may be in the spiritual world and not see it. The spiritual eye is veiled by the material. Its organization is too delicate to be acted upon directly by the gross forms of matter. It requires the delicate spiritual ethers to flow into its forms, and the dark veil of matter to be removed, before spiritual objects can be revealed to it.

It is the same with all the senses. In a perfectly

sound sleep a person is as truly in the material world as he is in full wakefulness. But he has no consciousness of it. Change of place would give him no consciousness of the world. Place him under the open canopy of heaven, beneath all the splendour of the sun, or the magnificence and silent grandeur of the stars; place him on a precipice, where the slightest motion would hurl him to destruction, and it is all the same. *Wake* him, and he is in the world without rising from his bed. Our spiritual senses are asleep, and we cannot see the spiritual world about us until they are awakened.

But it is not necessary for us to see it as it is in itself, to gain a certain knowledge of its universal presence. We never see any cause or power in its most interior forms—in its source. Who ever saw attraction except in the form of its effects? No person in this world ever saw, with the natural eye, a human being. No one but the materialist believes that the material body is the man himself, yet that is all we can see in this world. We see material features, colours, motions, changes. But we do not see the real human being. That dwells within, and can only manifest itself through the veil of the body. All that you see, or can see, is the material covering of the spiritual being. You know that the man is there, within. For the body cannot move itself. It is as helpless as any other earthly object, when man leaves it. Its wonderful organization does not give it life, any more than the multiplication of wheels gives a machine power. The organs of the body are nothing but instruments constructed by Infinite Wisdom, to enable the soul to accomplish its purposes in the material world.

But the man and his material body act together in such perfect harmony, as one, that we say we see the man himself, when we see the body. And it is proper we should, for we do see where the man is and what he is doing. We know that he is in the body, and that it is he that hears, and sees, and feels, and speaks, and acts, though we cannot see his real self.

In the same way the spiritual world is present in the material world, maintains it in existence, and operates all the changes in it. The planets are carried around in their orbits by a spiritual force. We very properly call it attraction, but attraction is only the name of the effect. The real force is spiritual. Matter has no power in itself either to change its form or to retain it. A piece of iron or stone is held together by attraction, we say. Remove the attraction and it becomes fluid. Remove it to a still greater degree, and it becomes aeriform, and we do not know where the process would end. All the forces which keep material bodies in their form are in their last analysis spiritual and Divine.

Matter has no form of its own. Every material form is cast into the mould of a spiritual form. There is no power inherent in matter to form itself into diamonds and granite ; into grass, and blossoms, and fruit, and the innumerable beautiful objects of the vegetable kingdom. There is no quality in nitrogen, carbon, and phosphorus, to combine and assume the form of bones, muscles, and flesh. The whole animal kingdom is cast into the mould of the corresponding spiritual kingdom. And the spiritual forces which create and sustain it are constantly present and active. Indeed, the material world is a perpetual creation.

Wherever you see action, change, or growth, you may infer that spiritual forces are present, with just the same certainty that you infer that man is in a material body, when you see it moving, and performing all the functions of life in this world. It is said that the changes and motions which are continually taking place in matter, are caused by the light and heat of the sun. This is true in one sense. Heat acts on a certain plane and to some extent. But it is a spiritual substance within the heat which causes the heat, and gives it its power; and while the heat, on the material plane, softens and melts the hard forms of matter, and makes them pliant to finer influences, spiritual forces flow in and mould them into such forms as they are capable of assuming. The sun itself is created from the spiritual world, and its magnetic forces and ever-radiating heat are perpetually fed from it. The suns are the primary centres into which spiritual substances are gathered, and from which the material universe is created, and those substances continue to dwell within the magnetic auras and luminous ethers. Light, and heat, and magnetism, are only the finer material coverings of spiritual substances, which give them all their force. They are the soft linings of grosser forms. Wherever there is matter there is spirit. Wherever there is a material world there is a spiritual world. Wherever there is a germ or plant, a blossom, or fruit, or any living thing, there is a rough cast of a spiritual form. It may be a very rude and imperfect outline of it, comparing with it only as the roughest sandstone with the fine organization of the living body, or the coarsest clay with the delicate petals of the blossom. But rough and coarse as it is,

it was fashioned after a spiritual prototype, as the material body is moulded into the form of the man who dwells within it. The elements of the earth have no more power of themselves to assume the forms of the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms, than the food we eat has to assume the human form, or than the block of marble has to roll itself from the quarry, and stand erect in the graceful beauty of a Venus or Apollo.

This every one acknowledges; but Christian and natural philosophers carry the cause only a few steps from the effect, and seem unwilling to admit that there can be any substantial thing beyond the limits of their own senses. But the doctrines of the New Church, with an inflexible logic, follow all real causes out of the material world, and in doing so they look in the direction, though far in advance, of all scientific discovery. The logic is simple, and the steps plain. One of the essential properties of matter is inertia; its purest and most subtile forms have no more power, of themselves to act, than the sod or rock. Nor can these forces reside within, as original and self-sustaining causes in the form of laws. It is customary in common speech to attribute the power which moves and moulds matter to physical laws. But law has no more power in itself than matter; it is merely the order in which some real power acts. The planets are not kept in their orbits by the law of gravitation, but according to it. Strictly speaking, civil laws have no power. They are only the rule and method according to which men act. The preservation of the material universe, and all the changes and activities which take place in it, must be the effect of a cause

which is not material, and that cause must be present to all the forms of matter and in them, in every particle; for a cause cannot act where it is not present. That cause cannot be material. It must of necessity therefore be spiritual.

Here we get another proof that spirit is a substance. It is evident that there can be no abstract power. Power is the force with which something acts. That which moves and moulds the material world must be substantial. It must be able to grasp matter and wield it at will. The inconceivable and awful forces that sustain the material universe, and carry planets, and suns, and systems in their vast orbits, in such order and harmony, are spiritual, and are perpetually operating. The same forces sketch ferns in crystals of frost upon the window-pane, weave the green web of the leaf, knit the tough fibre of the oak, and mould the delicate and lovely forms of the lily and the rose. Out of the dead earth and crumbling stone; out of dews and rain-drops, and vernal airs, and sunbeams, they distil the delicious juices of innumerable delicate savours, and exhilarating wines, and present them to insect and worm; to animal and man, in the beautiful forms of the berry, the purple cups of the grape, and the golden bowls of the pear and the apple. Turn where you will, above, around, below, all the forms you see are spiritual forms, veiled in the thin disguise of matter; all sounds that fall upon the ear are spiritual harmonies, muffled and made discordant often by the imperfect material instruments through which they are sent to us. We are in that world now. It surrounds us, pervades us; its pulses beat through us, and give to us and to all things, form, motion, life.

I ask every intelligent mind if this is not a rational, and the only rational view of the subject? Does not all scientific discovery point in this direction? Science is resolving all physical force into heat. The next step must be the one the New Church has already taken—the acknowledgment that all force is spiritual. Thus the two worlds are present to each other, and are most intimately blended. Our answer to the third question, therefore, is : *The spiritual world is here.*

IV. The last question—What is the relation of the spiritual world to this world?—has been substantially answered already. In principle it is the relation of cause to effect. The spiritual world is real and substantial. It existed prior to this; and if this world should be destroyed, it would still exist. This world was formed from it, and there is not a material object that has not a spiritual prototype.

Such, briefly, are the doctrines of the New Church upon this most interesting subject. In many respects they reverse the opinions commonly entertained. They give us a real spiritual world to think about, and to look forward to as our eternal home. The more they are examined the clearer their truth will become. From whatever side they are regarded, whether from science, from analogy, from reason or revelation, from human or the Divine nature, they will be found consistent with themselves, with the Sacred Scriptures, and in harmony with all we know of both worlds. They will satisfy the reason and content the heart.

LECTURE II.

MAN ESSENTIALLY A SPIRITUAL BEING—THE VARIOUS DEGREES OF HIS LIFE—REASONS FOR COMMENCING HIS EXISTENCE IN THIS WORLD.

IN discussing the great themes which I have selected for our consideration for a few evenings, it may prevent disappointment, and assist us in coming to just conclusions, to bear in mind that the proof of the Doctrines which the New Church teaches upon these subjects, cannot be of the same nature, though it may be just as conclusive, as that which we accept concerning natural things. We cannot demonstrate the spiritual world and the spiritual body to the natural senses; we cannot see and feel a spiritual form. The senses take cognizance only of those things to which they are specifically adapted. It is as illogical and absurd to ask for a physical proof of the existence of a spiritual truth, as it would be for a man to demand that light should be demonstrated to the senses of hearing and touch, before he would believe in its existence.

We must not forget, also, that our minds are finite, and there are some things which we cannot know; which no finite being can ever know. We can gain no knowledge of anything as it is in itself, in its

inmost essence. The wisest man is just as unable as the little child to tell why certain effects should follow certain causes. For example : No natural philosopher can tell why the waves of ether flowing into the eye cause the sensation of light. He will tell you all about the coats and lenses of the eye, and show how perfectly they are arranged to form an image of the natural object upon its retina. But ask him why those causes produce such an effect, rather than another, and he cannot answer a word. It is neither necessary nor useful to us to know the essences of things, and the reasons why certain causes will produce certain effects. It is enough to know that those causes do exist, and to be able to trace their connection with their effects.

I hope, also, that I shall not convey to any one the impression that I seek to prove a point by any trick of logic, merely for the purpose of making out a case. An enforced conviction is of no value. We are immortal—we are to live through unending years. You and I, my friends, in a few days, are to push off, into what to most persons “is an unknown dark.” Can we gain any clear, rational knowledge of what awaits us? I believe, I know, we can. The writings of the New Church contain disclosures upon this subject, which must be satisfactory when understood, and which can be found nowhere else. I desire only to tell you what those disclosures are, and to give you such reasons and illustrations of their truth as may assist you in accepting them.

I am to speak of man as a Spiritual Being ; of the various degrees of his life ; and to give some reasons why he commences his existence in this world.

1. Our Doctrines declare, and the whole force of their teaching and logic goes to show, that man is essentially a Spirit. Let us get the full force and meaning of this proposition clearly before our minds. We mean far more by this declaration than that man *has* a spirit. We mean that he *is* a Spirit; that every distinctly human quality he possesses is spiritual. Or to reverse the proposition: a spirit is a *man*—a human being; and there are no men, no human beings, who are not spirits. You are spirits, and all that distinguishes you from the plant and animal is spiritual. The substances out of which you are made are spiritual, and the human form which those substances have assumed is a spiritual form. Plants and animals aspire to the human form, but they do not attain it, because they have no spiritual nature in the human form to mould the material into its likeness.

It is the prevalent opinion that man is in the human form only as to his material body; and that his spirit is some vital force, which gives him life somewhat as steam gives motion to machinery; and it has been a disputed point with philosophers for ages, in what particular part of man his soul or spirit dwelt. Some put it in the head, some in the heart, and some in other parts of the body. When a man dies it is common to say, "His spirit has left him," as though some part of him, some formless essence, had fled and left him behind, implying that the material body is essentially the man himself.

But the Doctrines of the New Church take exactly the opposite view. They declare that the *spirit* is in the human form; that it dwells in every part of the body, in the minutest microscopic cell and fibre. In

stead of saying, or admitting, or implying, that man is a material being and *has a spirit*, we say he *is a spiritual being* and *has a material body*; and when he dies, the man departs and leaves his material body behind him. It is the spirit that gives form to the body, casts it into its own image and likeness, and constantly gives it the power to retain the human form. Consequently, when man leaves his body, its organization falls to pieces; the substances which composed it are dissipated, and the whole form disappears. But the man himself is not touched by it. He retains his distinct personality. His human form is no more affected by the dissipation of the material body, than *that* is by the wearing out of his clothes. Now let us see what reasons we can find for this spiritual personality of man.

In my last lecture I showed that a spiritual substance is as necessary to the existence of a spiritual world and spiritual beings, as matter is to the existence of a material world and a material body. Admitting, then, that there are spiritual substances, and that these substances can exist in various forms—as aëri-form, fluid, and solid—we have no difficulty in admitting that a complete spiritual body could be organized out of them, having the same organs, within and without, as the material. The spiritual body could have a head, trunk, and limbs; the spiritual senses could be organized in the same manner as the natural senses; the head could have eyes, ears, and brains, and all the features of the face; a spiritual heart could beat in the chest, and propel spiritual blood through spiritual arteries; the lungs could breathe a spiritual atmosphere, and perform the same

office for the blood that the material lungs do for the material blood. Indeed there could be a complete spiritual body, in every particular, in the human form, competent to perform all the functions of a man relatively the same as the material body.

2. Having shewn the possibility, according to our admitted premises, of a fully organized spiritual man, let us look at its probability.


A little observation will convince us that it is in perfect harmony with all we know of the Lord's methods of accomplishing His purposes, that man should have this spiritual organization. If we go back to the beginning of time, we find, according to the testimony of the earth itself, as it is recorded in the rocky pages of its own history, that it was then a seething mass of inorganic elements. According to general belief, it was a molten ball of fire, with no ground, no rock, and no distinction of forms in its fiery mass. By cooling, rocks, and afterwards earths, appeared. The perfection of mineral forms was attained by crystallization, which seems to be a rude effort and faint prophecy of organization.

The next step is the plant. The finer elements of matter are organized into a new and higher creation. A wonderful series of forms are combined, mutually acting and reacting upon each other, and working together for a definite end. A germ unfolds into a root for the earth, and a stalk for the air. Each goes its own way, multiplies itself, and imbibes the materials necessary for the growth of the whole plant. The slender stalk becomes a trunk, which spreads out into branch, and stem, and leaf; into stamen and

pistil, and blossom, and fruit. The end is reached ; the circle of its life is complete. It is a wonderful mystery. Its methods and order, the beauty and variety of its forms, are past all human comprehension. But the plant is unconscious of its own beauty and glory. It stands immovably fixed in the earth. It can do nothing but grow and bear leaves to fall, and blossoms to fade, and fruit to perish or reproduce itself.

What plan does Infinite Wisdom devise to take another grand step ? Does he abandon the old method by which he made the plant ? No ; he effects it by a new series of finer and more delicate organic forms. He uproots the plant from the earth, and gives it *sensation*, by means of a new series of organic forms—the nerves. And now you may begin with the lowest zoophyte, and go all the way up, step by step, through all the grades of animal life, until you reach the highest, and you will find that the Lord never deviates from His first method. Every step consists in a finer and more complicated organization. There is no exception to this law. Man, viewed simply as a material being, stands at the head of all animal life ; and he surpasses all other creatures in the fineness and complexity of his organization.

Man is the crowning work of the Creator. We cannot doubt that it was the Divine purpose to make all things serve him, and to bring him into the most intimate and various relations to all forms of matter and all degrees of animated life. How has Infinite Wisdom effected this end ? How has He given man such power over the earth, that he can make every element and every object serve him ? By his organization. The eye brings home to his door the sun and



the planets, and remote constellations ; mountain and valley, ocean and stream ; the specific forms of mineral, plant, and animal ; the grandeur and beauty of the landscape ; the splendours of colour ; the perpetual play of light and shadow ; reveals them to his consciousness, and makes them the objects of his affection and thought. Occupying but a few cubic feet of space, and by his nature bound to the earth, and limited to a few natural objects by personal contact, he can yet, with one scope of vision, take in the canopy of heaven, and the vast amphitheatre of earth. But the eye reveals to him only one class of material qualities, the forms, and motions, and changing hues of earth and sky, and is affected by matter only in one of its distinct degrees, the ether.

Another degree, the air, is filled with innumerable harmonies, communicated to it by leaf, and tree, and stream ; by mountain, and ocean, and storm ; by bird and beast. The sounds of labour, the many-toned voices of truth, of friendship, and love, and the inspirations of the great masters of song—how can they be made available for human use and happiness ? The Lord solved the problem by the formation of another organ, the ear, adjusted to the activities of this material plane. The ear gathers up all these vibrations, and pours the riches of harmony, thought, and affection, into the soul. By this simple but miraculous arrangement, the air is made the medium of communication between man and man, and every soul is brought into intimate contact with many others.

There are other qualities of things of which neither eye nor ear can gain any knowledge ; the fragrance

that flows from all material objects ; the savours that make delicious the reception of the food necessary to our sustenance. The Lord organized senses to perceive all these qualities and communicate to man their delights. The sense of touch reveals to us still other qualities of material objects ; enables us to handle them, and mould them into special forms adapted to our use.

Thus we see that all man's knowledge of the material world, and all his ability to use the various objects which compose it, are given him by his organization. This is the method of Infinite Wisdom, and, so far as we know, there are no deviations from it.

Now, when He desires to take another distinct step ; when He wishes to create a being of a higher order than plant or animal ; to endow him with thought and reason ; to give him the power to see the order, beauty, harmony, and evidences of design in the universe, and to love the Lord and his neighbour ; when He determines to communicate to him all those qualities which are distinctly human, and which make him the perfection and glory of the creation, is it probable that He abandons the method which He has hitherto uniformly pursued ? Every step in the progress from chaotic matter to the will and the understanding—those qualities which conjoin man more immediately with the Lord himself—has been effected by a finer and more varied organization ; and now He abandons this method ! nay, reverses it, and accomplishes His highest ends by a thin, invisible vapour, a substanceless and formless essence ! Can you conceive anything more improbable and absurd than that ? It would seem impossible for any rational mind to entertain the idea

for a moment. If there is any force in the law of analogy, it cannot be. The whole creation, with united voice, proclaims that, when the Lord would create a being to think, to reason, and to love—to exercise those faculties which we call spiritual—He would effect it by the organization of spiritual substances.

3. We must guard against the opposite error, however, of supposing that the perfection of man is due to organization and form alone. The nature of the *substance* of which the organ is formed, is as essential to its perfection as the form itself. And here we find a most conclusive argument for the truth, that man is essentially a spiritual being. Matter cannot observe, reflect, remember, compare, reason, understand, and love. It has no voluntary power. Refine it and organize it to the utmost extent of its possibilities, it is still passive, and in itself dead. Consequently the human body cannot perform one of its functions, after man has left it, though its organization remains perfect. The eye cannot see, the ear hear, the brain think. Matter can perform material offices only. It follows, therefore, of necessity, that it must be some other substance that is the subject of mental and distinctly human qualities, and that substance must be spiritual. If it is not, we have no knowledge whatever concerning it. We are inevitably brought to the conclusion, therefore, that all those qualities which distinguish man from the plant and animal, and are properly human, are due to his spiritual nature; or, in other words, they are activities of a spiritual organization.

4. Still, some persons may distrust a course of

reasoning against a generally accepted principle, even though it may seem conclusive. They may think there is some flaw or sophistry in it, though they may not be able to detect it, and say, "It looks plausible, perhaps it may be so, perhaps not." Let us suppose, then, that it is not; that man is not essentially a spiritual being; that his human form and organization are limited to the material body. He has no spiritual eye, no ear, no brain, no face, no head, no heart and lungs; no hands, no feet, no limbs, no veins, arteries, nerves. Is he not literally, and emphatically, *nobody*? What is there in him, to think, to feel, to know, to will, to act? Nothing. By that process of reasoning, if it is worthy of the name, you annihilate him.

Some may say there is a vital principle or an abstract spiritual power left after the dissolution of the material body. But there can be no abstract power. Power is the force with which some form and substance acts. A principle is nothing but the law or method according to which causes effect their ends. We may affirm, and reaffirm, that the soul exists; but if we deny to it all forms and modes of existence, our verbal affirmation will avail nothing against our practical denial.

5. But we argue, further, that man cannot preserve his identity, and his consciousness of individual existence, if he has no spiritual or personal form. When the material body is resolved into nitrogen, phosphorus, carbon, and the various gases and earths of which it is composed, it is no longer a human body, and consequently there is no possibility of its identification, for all personality is lost. We hope to meet our friends, when

we pass into the spiritual world, and to be reunited to those we love. But how shall we know them, if neither they nor we have any form? Two—what shall I call them?—two essences, without substance or form, two vital principles *meet*. What a meeting! How could they *meet*? What is there to meet or to be met? How could they recognise each other? What would there be to recognise? What special characteristics would there be to distinguish and individualize them? None.

Suppose some soul or vital principle did continue to exist, as a breath or vapour, or formless and unsubstantial ghost, it would not be ourselves, no more than the ashes on the hearth, and the gases and vapours dispersed in the atmosphere, are the tree with its coronal of peculiar leaves, its glory of blossom, and its wealth of fruit. Suppose there do remain real essences, but diffused and unorganized, as the carbon from a consumed diamond, or wine from crushed grapes. The diamond could not identify itself in the gas. Charcoal, and many other substances, might claim with equal right the same substances. No individual grape of any particular cluster could discern and separate from the pipe the fine globules of juice that filled its cells. No more would a human essence find itself in a formless atmosphere or cloud of diffused and interblending essences. No one could say, "This is I." There is, therefore, no hope for the continuance of your existence, unless you can retain your human form. Allowing that some residuum may remain from you, it will not be you. You have become absorbed in the undistinguishable elements, your identity is lost, and you are no more.

6. The force of this truth presses upon the understanding so powerfully, that even those who deny that man has a spiritual organization, are compelled to admit its possibility, and to acknowledge that he will have a spiritual form, and become *somebody* at the resurrection. But if material substances are to be transmuted into a spiritual body by the purification and exaltation of their elements, then there can be spiritual substances and a spiritual form, and the whole question of impossibility is given up. How much more rational and in accordance with all we know of the Divine methods, to admit that there are spiritual substances distinct from matter, capable of being moulded by the Divine Wisdom into every variety of organic form.

7. In my last lecture I gave some reasons for believing that the spiritual world is a real world, filled with innumerable forms objective to those who dwell in it. But if that world is the abode of souls that have no form and no substance, and, consequently, no senses, it is of no consequence whether it is a world of surpassing beauty, or a dreary, unchanging void. It would be all the same to them; having no eye, they could see no beauty; having no ear, there could be no harmony for them. It would be a land of unbroken silence, of eternal darkness and hopeless death. Can the human mind conceive a greater absurdity than such an idea? As we rise towards the All-perfect, do we come into the realms of silence and nothingness? As we are formed more fully into the image and likeness of the Lord, do all personal distinctions fade away? Do we lose our identity, and become a name-

less and formless essence? So far as our observation extends, distinctness and individuality of form, fineness and complexity of organization, increase with every step of progress. But when man is to take the final step which separates him from all other creatures, and allies him to angels and the Lord, the whole process is reversed, the universal method is abandoned, and all things revert to emptiness and chaos!

No; it cannot be. No difficulty is avoided by this supposition; nothing is gained by it but innumerable contradictions, an insult to reason, the practical annihilation of man, and the denial of a universal method and infinite wisdom to the Lord.

But this question is one of such transcendent importance, and one about which there are so many doubts and so much unbelief, that it is useful to get all the testimony we can upon the subject. Let us therefore see what the Lord teaches us in His Holy Word upon it.

1. The Bible in every part regards the spirit as the man. Its whole scope, form, and purpose are directed to man as a spiritual being. It appeals to his fears and hopes as a spiritual being. If it is anything more than any other book, it is a revelation to man of his spiritual nature, of a spiritual world, of a spiritual destiny, of a substantial existence in a spiritual world totally distinct from the material world. It comes to man in his Egyptian darkness, and bondage to the flesh and the world, to break off his material chains, to lift him up into a light higher than his own. The Lord appears to him, and rescues him from natural dangers and death, when there is no possibility of any human aid, that he might get recognition from men; that they

might know from actual experience that there is another world, and other beings, and supernatural influences immanent in this. The Lord gives man laws with supernatural sanctions; sends His angels to warn, rescue, and guide; sends His prophets with His Word; works the most stupendous miracles, and finally comes Himself, by assuming our nature, to keep alive in man the idea of his spiritual being and destiny. That is the whole scope and purpose of the Lord's manifestations to men, and of His instructions through prophets and apostles in His Word.

2. Furthermore, the Lord everywhere recognises man as a spiritual being. He addresses him as such. His laws respect him as such; they look to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The outward action, the merely bodily, physical deed, is not anywhere recognised as the essential act. It is the motive, the intention, the act of the spirit, that weighs. "Circumcision is of the heart." "The sacrifices of God are a broken heart." "I am come into the world," says our Lord, "that men may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." Not physical life, but spiritual life. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

3. But let us look at some particular examples. When the Lord speaks of those who have passed from this life into the spiritual world, He speaks of them as living and substantial men. In His reply to the Sadducees, who did not believe in any life after this, He says—"As touching the dead that they rise, have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not

the God of the dead, but the God of the living." If there is any force in this reasoning, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still living as real, substantial beings. They preserve their personality and identity. Abraham is still Abraham, and Jacob is Jacob still. They are not some unsubstantial, formless, shadowy essence, or vapoury ghost of what they once were. They are not some abstract principle of thought and affection, while all that constituted them distinctly human beings lies mouldering in the grave, or is dispersed among the elements; but the men themselves. And if they are alive as real human beings, so are all who have passed into the spiritual world. If this is not so, God is no longer their God, according to His own declaration. They are dead in the sense the Sadducees understood it. They have ceased to exist. The death of the body is the extinction of their being. Our fathers, and our children, and our many loved ones whose bodies we have committed to the earth, are no longer ours. They have no God. They are nothing. They have been annihilated. And we shall soon follow into the abyss of nothingness.

At the Transfiguration, also, Moses and Elias appeared unto the Lord, and Peter, James, and John, and talked with them. Is not this conclusive evidence that Moses and Elias were still living as distinct human beings? If it was some formless essence, or abstract thinking principle, why was it designated as Moses and Elias? Why might it not have been any thinking principle?

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, also, we have first an account of the rich man and Lazarus in this world; then the statement that they died; then

we find them in the spiritual world, Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, the rich man in hell. They recognise each other; they speak to each other. How could they if they were formless essences? They have organized members of the human form. Lazarus has a finger; did he not also have a hand, an arm, and a complete human form? Dives had a tongue, and could speak; and so also could Abraham. Does not this imply all the organs of the head, the brain, thorax, lungs, and the whole human form? Had they lost anything of form, feature, organization, or personal existence? Nothing. Yet they died and were buried. They were dead in the sense commonly given to the word.

But to put the question beyond any doubt, John says he saw in the spiritual world "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever." Now here we have persons who have a voice, which implies the whole internal organization of a human being. They had hands, and held palm branches in them. They had feet, and stood upon them. They were clothed with white robes. Were they merely vital principles or formless essences, belonging to organized bodies then lying in the sepulchre; or which had become incorporated into animals and plants or other human bodies? One of the elders told John that these glorified and rejoicing were—what shall I call them?—vital sparks, the mere adjuncts of a human

being? No. "They are they which came out of great tribulation." They came from the earth, therefore. They were men and women who had lived and laboured, and struggled and died upon this earth. They had been prophets, apostles, and martyrs. They constituted a part of that cloud of witnesses of whom Paul says—"They were stoned; they were sawn asunder; were tempted; were slain with the sword; wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." And they had attained it. For the angel declared—"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

This evidence might be indefinitely multiplied. But it is unnecessary. Those who will not be convinced by the testimony already given, would not be if their own eyes were opened, and they could see the great multitude of the departed, and hear their heavenly songs. They would call it an illusion of the imagination. And yet any other supposition than that the spirit is the man, is contrary to the whole tenor and purpose of the Scriptures, contrary to the testimony of apostles and prophets, the angels, and the Lord himself; and involves the whole question of the future life of man in contradiction, doubt, and darkness.

On the other hand, the simple admission that man is essentially a spiritual being, having a complete human organization and form, accords with all we know of the Divine method of accomplishing His ends,

is in the direct line of all His providences; in harmony with reason and revelation; involves no contradictions, and holds out to man the sure and glorious hope of preserving his identity through eternity, under more favourable conditions, for the exercise of every faculty, and the attainment of every joy.

I have dwelt somewhat at length upon this topic, because it is of essential importance to all our subsequent investigations. Man is the subject of our whole course of lectures. We are to follow him, if possible, from his earthly home into the spiritual world; to learn the changes through which he passes; the means by which they are effected; and the nature of his life, when he reaches his final abode. But if he vanishes from our mental sight, we may speculate and reason, but it will be to no purpose, for we shall reason about we know not what. It is necessary to have a substantial subject, or being, to whom we can refer all these changes and activities. Then we shall have a definite form before us, and we shall not be lost in endless abstractions.

Regarding the truth as well established, then, that man is essentially a spiritual being, or a spirit in the human form, having a substantial spiritual body, which is to preserve its identity through all its changes to eternity, we are prepared to discuss our next topic, which is—

II. The various degrees of his life. It was a true saying of ancient wisdom, that Man is a microcosm, a universe in miniature. Into his nature and form are collated all the substances and qualities of the whole creation. Every kingdom and plane of nature has its

representative in him. The golden chain of being let down from the Lord finds all its links in man, and by him returning to the Lord, completes the cycle of causes and effects. But these innumerable substances, forms, and qualities, are not promiscuously blended in him; they are arranged in distinct planes, which everywhere run parallel to each other, but never meet. This distinction of degree is seen in the various kingdoms of nature. It is also seen in the human body. The bones, the nerves, the blood-vessels, are all perfectly distinct from each other; all have different functions; all act together in unity, but each preserves its individuality, and never becomes merged in the other. Thus, as to his material body, man is a series of organic forms, one rising above another in excellence and use. By these various degrees of his being, he is related to the various planes of matter. By the eye and the nervous system he is connected with the ether and the finer magnetic element, by the ear and the lungs with the atmosphere; by the other senses, which are all modifications of the sense of touch, with solids and fluids. Above and within the material body, he has a spiritual body, which has the same distinct degrees as the material, and by them he is related to the spiritual world, in the same way that he is related to the material world, by the three planes of the material body. The highest or inmost degree of his life lies next to the Lord, or to the purest vital forces which perpetually flow from Him, and fill and give life to all beings, and perpetual creation to all things. This inmost degree of his spiritual organization is brooded over and pressed upon by Divine influences, as the outer surface of the material body,

which lies next to the material world, is pressed on all sides by the atmosphere, the ether, and the various material forces. These degrees never coalesce. They are a clean cleavage, running through nature and man. They extend out indefinitely in their relations to all things on the same plane, but no degree can rise above or fall below itself. These discrete degrees constitute the golden chain of being—the Jacob's Ladder on which the angels of God ascend and descend. The Lord is at the top of it; the earth, on which it rests, at the bottom. Thus, the highest and the lowest meet in man. He is the grand audience-hall where all beings and all things can meet, from the Lord to the rock, each in its appropriate place, and he can give and receive from all.

The subject is one which demands fuller consideration than I can give it now. I have barely stated it, because it seems necessary to a clear understanding of our next and final topic for the evening, and that is—

III. The reasons why man commences his life in this world. The various planes or degrees of existence which are found everywhere in nature and man, all rest upon each other. The foot of the ladder stands upon the earth. The highest degrees are not fully formed first, but last. I say *fully* formed. They do, indeed, exist as causes, or, as we say, in potency, but not actually. They exist as the tree exists in the germ of the seed; as the animal in the embryo. But they cannot become fully formed without a basis to rest upon.

Let us look at some examples and illustrations of this general truth, and then apply them to the par-

ticular case under consideration. Let us suppose this problem, one which has already been solved. Given the sun and all spiritual forces to form a plant. It could not be formed in the sun ; its fierce fires and intense activities would not permit it. The earth must first be created. Those pure, flaming substances which compose the sun must be emitted from it, and lose so much of their intense life as to become quiescent and passive. They must become rock and earth. Then a basis is formed on which the spiritual and finer material substances can rest, and into which they can act. Now, the Lord can form the germ, and endow it with power to collect the materials necessary to its growth. The sun stimulates all its activities, and communicates to it of its own substance ; the atmosphere and the water give their quota, and in process of time the plant is formed, and the problem solved. Now, you will observe, that in the first part of the work, the letting down of the chain, there was no organization and no possibility for any. Auras, ether, gases, fluids, and finally solids, were formed. Then the bottom was reached, and the ascent began. But in every step of the ascent, there must be a solid, a coat, or skin, or containing vessel, to hold the finer elements during the process of their organization. The grain of wheat, for example, must first form a vessel, which eventually becomes the chaff, to contain the pure substances that are to be organised into the grain. For they must be in a fluid state, or they would not yield to the spiritual forces which act from within and effect the organization of the grain, and cast it into their own mould.

Thus, the whole vegetable kingdom rests upon the

mineral kingdom, and could only have been formed subsequently to it. The animal kingdom, also, is based upon the vegetable, though in a different and more perfect way. Destroy all vegetable life, and all animals would soon die, and man himself must cease to exist upon the earth. There was the same necessity for a basis and containing ultimate for the organization of man as a spiritual being, that there was for the grain of wheat.

But let us take another example. An artist has a clear conception in his own mind of a beautiful human face. It is an ideal or spiritual form, and he desires to bring it out into actual and permanent existence before him. If he is a painter, it must be done by means of light, of colour. The light flows around him; all its colours are in every ray that enters his eye. But he cannot use them directly. They must be embodied in material substances before he can handle them; and then he must have his canvas, or some other material basis, upon which to deposit them, in the various combinations necessary to bring out into permanent form the beautiful conception in his own mind. The Lord is the great creative artist, and this is the plan His infinite wisdom has formed to create all beings and all things. The spiritual body cannot be organised directly from spiritual substances. They must have a material basis to rest upon—a material covering to contain their fine essences until they are deposited and wrought into such organic and permanent forms, that they may become the subjects of thought and affection; of a conscious, and when in true order, of a blessed life; a fit temple for the indwelling of the Lord.

This is a brief and very imperfect statement of a doctrine, which, as we shall see, has a most important bearing upon the succeeding subjects of discourse.

Thus the earths are the seminaries of the heavens. Upon them the Lord plants human souls as the husbandman plants seeds in the earth, that they may gain organization, form, and individual being. And when that is accomplished, they throw off the material body, as the wheat rejects the chaff, and pass on into open and conscious life in the spiritual world. There, freed from the incumbrances and restrictions of a material body, with their identity perfectly preserved, they will find full scope for the development of all good affections, and the attainment of every joy. Every step, from conception to the grave, has been a preparation for this grand result. How this great step in life is effected, will be the subject of our next discourse.

LECTURE III.

DEATH ; ITS NATURE, NECESSITY, AND CAUSE. AN ORDERLY STEP IN LIFE.

THE theme of our discourse to-night is one of the most momentous to human hope and happiness that man is called upon to investigate and decide. If death is the end of our individual and conscious being; if nothing remains but the ashes from the burnt taper, or a formless essence that soars away and mingles with the elements; if our glowing hopes, our lofty aspirations, our consciousness of capacities for knowledge and happiness which have just begun to expand, are all cut off by death, and buried in the grave—then, indeed, man is the greatest enigma in the universe. Compared with the possibilities of his nature, he is the fading flower, the withering grass, the morning cloud, the tale that is told.

But if death is only the completion of the first little round in life—the first short flight; if it marks the end only of his seed-time; if his budding hopes, his lofty aspirations, and dawning consciousness of desires which no earthly good can fill, are but the swelling germs of faculties that are to blossom and bear immortal fruit; if he leaves in the grave only the

swaddling-clothes of his spiritual infancy, and rises as from a sleep, in perfect human form, with all his memory, his consciousness of individual being, to enter upon an endless career, in which hope is changed into fruition, and aspiration into attainment; then death is the grand step in life. It solves all its enigmas; it is the fulfilment, of which this life is but the prophecy; and to the wise and pure it opens the shining portals of an endless day.

The doctrines of the New Church teach us that death is this great step in life; that, from the beginning, it was a part of the Divine plan, according to which man was to attain the highest possibilities of his nature; that it is necessary to the success of that plan; is orderly progress; is the natural side of the same event we call resurrection; and instead of shrinking from it as his direst enemy, he ought to regard it as his great deliverer and best friend.

I propose to give you some reasons for this belief, and as far as time and ability will permit, to offer the testimony which the Lord himself has given to its truth, in the two great revelations, recorded in His Word and created in His works. I invite your candid and earnest attention to this testimony. Lay aside, if you can, the prejudices of the past. Bring fresh and open minds to its consideration; weigh it in the balances of reason; measure it by the Divine methods written on everything around us, and judge it by your own conceptions of the ends which a being of infinite love and wisdom must seek in the creation of nature and man, and you can hardly fail to come to just conclusions.

In my first lecture, I endeavoured to show that there

are distinct spiritual substances, and a real spiritual world ; in my second lecture, I gave some reasons for the belief that man is essentially a spiritual being ; that he is a spirit in the human form, with a complete human organization, having spiritual senses adapted to spiritual objects, as his natural senses are adapted to natural objects ; that the material body is no part of the man, but simply the sustaining basis and continent of those spiritual substances of which the man himself is formed—the instrument he uses to perfect his complete spiritual organization, and lay the foundation for the superstructure of his future life.

Let us keep the fact distinctly before us, that the spirit is the man himself, and not some *caput mortuum*, some formless essence or unsubstantial ghost. For if we lose sight of the man, or mistake some unessential part of him for the man himself, we lose sight of the subject of our thought, and we may reason and speculate for ever, and come to no satisfactory conclusion, for we do not know what we are reasoning about ; and we shall be like men who run, but know not whither, and who, consequently, will never find the end of their race. Let us not be cheated, then, by any jugglery of words or any illusion of the senses. Let us keep the eye of the mind steadily fixed upon the spirit as the man himself.

What, then, is the death of man, according to the common meaning of the word *death* ? I answer—It is the withdrawal of the man himself from the material body. He casts the body aside. He deserts it. And by this act he steps out of this world into the spiritual world. By the simple act, no change is effected in the man himself, in form, organization, or character. He

is no better and no worse ; he knows no more and no less ; he has not lost or gained a single feature or faculty. He has only gained more favourable conditions for the attainment of his ends.

Nor is any change effected in the material body by the simple act of death. It has the same form, the same organization. The eye has the same coats and lenses ; it is composed of the same substances ; the nerves of taste and touch and motion are all perfect ; it possesses as much life as it ever did—that is, none at all. The simple act—the thing done—is the separation of two organic forms, which before had acted together as one. That form, in which life resided, still retains it ; and that which was dependent upon the other for all its power, and even for the ability to resist the common forces of nature and retain its form, has lost it ; and is as powerless to love, to think, to feel and act, as the substances which compose it were when they were metals, earth, and gases. It is true a great change soon commences in both forms. The material body having lost the special power which gave it organization, and enabled it to resist the common forces of nature, yields to their action, and returns to its former state—becomes earth and gas, and mingles with the elements ; while the *man* enters upon his new career, under new conditions, with corresponding results. Such is the change we call death. It is very small in itself, but most momentous in its results.

If we look at the body alone and mistake that for the man himself, as most persons practically do, the change is terrible. There lies the form we have loved, cold, motionless, dead. The red current of life that flowed through artery and vein, has become a stand-

ing pool; the nerves that gave sensation to the whole body and special ability to each organ to do its appropriate work, have lost their power; the light of thought and affection no longer beams upon us from the eye; the ear is deaf to our imploring cries; the smile of love has faded from the white lips, and no voice of recognition can ever move them more; the arm has lost its power and the fingers their cunning; the feet will run on no more errands of love and duty. And soon the very form disappears, mingles with the elements, and is lost. How terrible the fate, if that body was the man himself! How irreparable the loss, if the friend, the child, the husband, the wife we loved, was that form! I do not wonder that those who have no idea of man as a spiritual being shrink from death with horror; that it is universally regarded as the great agony and terror, and that multitudes cling to the hope that these elements may be reorganized into the human form, and man's personal existence be restored to him.

But if we regard the spirit as the real man, there is no loss of being or form or consciousness; there is no death. The same heart beats with the same love as ever; the same eye is luminous with affection and kind thoughts; the same ear hears, not our outward cries, but the secret aspirations and yearnings of our souls; the same face beams with the same, or a more unselfish and ardent love, and the lips whisper it to our inward ear; the same arms are stronger to give us spiritual support, and the same hands minister to our real wants with greater efficiency and tenderer skill; and the whole life of those we have loved is nearer our life, and throbs in and through our inmost being with a stronger pulse

than when the same form and the same life were separated from us by a wall of clay. We see them not. We never saw them. Only the mask they wore was visible to the natural senses. They have thrown off that, and when we throw off ours, we shall really see them and be seen, "not as through a glass darkly, but we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known." Such is the apparent and such is the real change we call death.

Let us now endeavour to ascertain the true grounds and necessity for the decay and dispersion of the material body. Is death an accident in man's life? Was it sent upon him as a punishment for sin? Is its real cause due to disease or external injuries? Or, is it a necessity from the nature of matter; from the nature of spirit, and from the Divine purposes as far as we are able to discern them in the Divine character and methods of operation as they are manifested in the Lord's Word and works? It is important that we settle these questions if possible; for if we can be assured that the death of the material body is an orderly step in life, that it was contemplated in the creation of man, and is not an interruption of the Divine purposes, and a penalty for sin, it will do much to disrobe it of its terrors and to give us juster views of the comparative value of spiritual and natural things. Let us examine the question, then, on all sides; from the material, the spiritual, and the divine.

We have no evidence that any material form can long retain its organization. Matter in itself is dead, passive, has no form of its own, and, by the action of general laws, constantly tends to its original chaotic state. All organization in the plant, animal, and man,

is formed and maintained by special forces, counter-acting the general laws to which matter is subject. Indeed, the material body is not a fixed, definite, and permanent object in itself. The substances which compose it are continually passing away, and must be continually renewed. They are like a flowing stream, going and coming. And the human form is perpetually maintained, because the soul seizes the new materials and casts them into her own image. The body is always dying and ever being born. When the form reaches its maximum, the creative and the destructive forces seem for a time to be in equilibrium. The banks of the stream are full. In a few years it begins to diminish, and no power of the soul is able to restore it to its former vigour, or to prevent it from final decay. There are no exceptions to this fact, either in plant or animal, and we have no grounds for supposing that any material organization is or could be indestructible.

Again, if man had lived immortal here, the number of inhabitants must, sooner or later, have reached the limit of the earth's ability to sustain them, or even to furnish room for them to stand ; and then the creation of human souls must have ceased. But who can believe for a moment that all the human beings this little mote in the universe can sustain, would satisfy the demands of infinite love and wisdom ? What would the Lord do through the coming eternity ? Could He be contented to sit down and merely listen to the endless repetition of prayers and praises from a few men and angels ? That would be contrary to the very nature of love. Love impels to action ; it is a motive power ; it is creative. Fill a human heart with a powerful affection, and it impels the whole man to

action. He cannot remain idle ; idleness is a perfect torment to him. What then must be the effect of infinite love, guided by infinite wisdom ?

But if the creation of human beings should cease by the limitation of the earth's capacity to supply their material wants, the whole structure of society must be changed. Many of its important elements would soon be wanting. There would be no infancy, no childhood, no age ; no room for enterprise, and no ground for enlarged hope. Man would be limited on all sides, and however high he might rise, society must, at some period, reach its level and become in a great measure stagnant. Viewed from the nature of matter and the material world, then, there are no evidences that it would have been for man's happiness, or that it would have been possible even, for him to remain for ever in this world. On the contrary, every principle of matter is against the supposition.

Let us now examine the question from the side of spirit, of the soul, and see if we can come to a different conclusion.

It is in accordance with the experience of all ages and universal consciousness, that all our mental and spiritual faculties are limited and restrained—"cabined, cribbed, confined"—by the material body. We begin to feel its restraints in infancy, and we maintain a life-long struggle against it. The infant feels it in its first efforts in learning to walk. Indeed, it is this very desire to escape from its restraints, that impels it to the difficult and perilous task. The foot will not convey it to the desired spot ; the hand will not grasp the glittering bauble. The youth, with all his exuberant life and strength, chafes under it. He would mount

with the eagle ; he would fly with the wind ; he would be here, there, everywhere, to gratify his insatiable curiosity. But the body lags behind and anchors him to the earth, and fetters his limbs. When he would learn to wield the instruments of labour or art, his industry and patience are tested to the utmost. Even in the prime of life, the body is never perfectly obedient to the soul. And then how soon the eye fails the scholar ; the hand will not obey the musician ; the nerves grow tremulous, and the muscles tire. A great part of the invention, skill, and effort of humanity is employed to overcome the weight and drag of the body. The steam-ship, the railway, and the telegraph, have all been called to assist man in keeping pace with his desires ; and though they have nearly annihilated space and time, he is as impatient of delay as ever, and grieves and despairs at the immeasurable distance between his attainments and his wants.

It is true he gains in his control over the body for a time, but he soon reaches the limit of its capacities ; and then its ability to express the thoughts and affections, and do the will of the spirit, continually diminishes. The strength fails ; the senses grow obtuse and dim ; and the body becomes the soul's prison ; shuts it out from the material world and all its delights ; fetters its limbs with feebleness, and immures it in a dungeon, devoid of light and joy. How terrible would be its fate if there was no release from it. And we have no grounds for believing that the body would not decay, even if man had not sinned, for the plant and the animal are subject to the same law. But death comes as a blessed deliverer from this bondage to the flesh ; breaks off our chains, clears the mist from the eye, *and sets every faculty free.*

Without doubt this resistance stimulates and develops our spiritual faculties, compels us to control and moderate our desires, and in manifold ways is useful to us for a time. But suppose we could throw off this burden of clay entirely and escape all the limitations and obstructions of time and space, and still retain our personality and the reality of our existence,—should we not accomplish at once what we are in the continual effort to do with all our labour and skill? If the spirit is the man himself, this is the service death renders us, and therefore it is necessary to the attainment of the highest possibilities of our nature. Every spiritual principle demands it. It must, therefore, have been a part of the Divine plan in our creation.

Keeping in mind this continual struggle of the soul against the limitations and weight of the body, let us see what the Lord reveals to us in His works concerning this subject. By general consent man is the only being in the world that is not in order and harmony with all things. The laws which regulate the material world are so perfect in their action, that whenever there is any perturbation, or deviation from the established harmony, scientific men begin to search for the cause. Once they feared it was due to some defect, and foreboded ruin; but since they were better instructed, they seek for some wider and more general law. When Leverrier found that there were irregularities in the motions of the outermost planets in our solar system, which could not be accounted for by any known laws of planetary motion, he inferred that there was a planet beyond Herschel not yet known to astronomers. And, after much observation and many calculations, he told them where to look for it; and

when they pointed their telescopes to the spot, they found it according to his prediction. Applying the same principle to man ; when we see the perturbations and conflict between the spiritual and material conditions of his life, all analogy would lead to the conclusion that there must be some cause beyond this life, some world above this, to whose laws he is subject, and that this conflict with matter and struggle for freedom is due to grander harmonies, and bids us look to that world for the solution of this apparent anomaly and for the true home of the soul.

The same lesson is taught still more forcibly in many other ways. So far as we know, there are no superfluous organs, no excess of power beyond use, in any part of the creation. Everything below man reaches its maturity, completes the cycle of its life, and attains its end. The plant does not seek to become an animal ; the fish does not aspire to dwell upon the land or soar in the air ; the animal gives no indications of any thought or desire for anything beyond this world. It finds enough here to satisfy every want and fill every desire. The demand and supply are always equal. There is no lack and no excess. There are no exceptions to this law.

This is not only true in general but in particular. Everywhere, in plant and animal, we find special adaptation. The child soon knows that the fish belongs to the water, and the bird to the air. This law of specific adaptation is so universal that scientific men never hesitate a moment to decide according to it. The geologist finds for the first time the petrifications of some long-extinct animal. The comparative anatomist will construct the whole animal from them.

He will tell you whether it dwelt upon land or in the water, or both. Nay, more, he will give you the general condition of the earth at the time the animal existed. The instructed mind can see the climate, the natural production, the relative prevalence of land and water, and the complete natural history of the earth, all written on the scale of the fish and the petrified bone—so perfectly are all things and all planes of the creation related. Ask him how he knows. Tell him he has never seen the animal. Perhaps no human eye ever rested upon one of its kind. May he not be mistaken? He laughs at your incredulity. The Lord, he would say, never deviates from his laws; He never makes any mistakes; He never fails in perfect adaptations. I am as certain that my deductions are true, as you are that the fish on your table came from the water, though you never saw it there.

Now is it probable that this law of adaptation, in large things and small, in general and particular forms, is universal until we reach man, the crown and glory of the Lord's works, and then fails? It is too irrational and absurd to be admitted for a moment. It is evident enough, even to superficial observation, that all things below man were created for him; and while they are all so beautifully and perfectly adjusted to each other, do they fail of their last connection? No sane mind can admit so great an absurdity.

But men say, I do not feel in harmony with these earthly things. They do not fully content and satisfy me. Very true. Suppose they did, what would it prove? That you were an animal and nothing more. And the fact, that no earthly good does content you,

proves just as conclusively that you have faculties which can only find full scope for their activities, and wants which can only be supplied, in a spiritual world; and consequently, it shows that man must discard the material body before he can obtain the means of fully satisfying all his wants, and the absolute certainty that natural death was one of the merciful provisions of the Lord from the beginning.

There is another law in nature, also without exception, which leads by inevitable deductions to the same conclusion, and, if possible, makes it more certain. The plant and animal attain their perfection by distinct steps, and in the lower steps preparations are always made for the higher; and when the higher step is taken, the means by which it was taken become an incumbrance, and are discarded. The natural world is full of illustrations of this law. Indeed, every organized form is an example of it. One will serve our purpose. Take the sparrow in the egg, just before it bursts the walls of its prison and escapes into the air. Here is a fully organized being, and yet not one of its organs is adapted to its present condition. Here are bones, muscles, feathers, especially adapted, in every respect, to the air. Every part is constructed with the utmost lightness, and the muscles are distributed and gathered into volume for the express purpose of giving strength where it is most needed. The form of the wing is made to cleave the air and bear the bird aloft. It has eyes for light, lungs for breathing, and a throat for song. But the sparrow can exercise none of these functions in the shell. Suppose it was conscious of its state as it lay there in its womb, but did not know of any other

world than that in which it was dwelling. It feels the impulse to stretch its wings, and pour forth a song, but it has no scope for either. If it reasoned as many men do, it would say—There is nothing here to content or satisfy me; but I know of nothing beyond. This shell is the boundary of my universe. If it should be destroyed, I might fall into nothingness, or be dispersed among the elements. How can a poor sparrow know anything beyond its own experience? It is true the sparrow cannot reason, but acts according to the instincts implanted in its nature by the Lord to be the law of its life, and consequently it struggles against its narrow walls, and soon emerges into a new world. Now it sports in short flights from tree to tree; fills the morning and the evening air with its social song; finds its mate, and attains the full end of its creation. It feels no impulses, and has no hopes beyond its fruition. It follows the law of Divine Wisdom embodied in it, and reaps the full rewards of its obedience.

Now, *we* believe that every bone and muscle and feather, and every organ within and without, is a true prophet of its future state. We know also that every prophecy is fulfilled. These organs foretell another world of ineffable perfections compared with the one in which it then dwelt. They prophesy of air and light; of joyous song and social flight; of worm and seed for all its needs—and every prophecy is fulfilled to the letter.

So it is with everything in the material world. Wherever you find any overplus of organization or strength beyond the present wants of plant and animal, it is an unfailing evidence of a state not yet attained.

Does any one suppose, then, that these blind surgings of man's soul against the prison walls of the body have no meaning? Does the Lord follow a certain method with unvarying regularity up to man, and then stop short, and even reverse it in him? No; it cannot be. The Lord always works like Himself; He pursues the same order and method in all planes of the creation that come within our knowledge, and no human ingenuity can suggest a reason why He should abandon them for man, more than for the insect and sparrow.

Every one knows that we never find anything in this world to fully content and satisfy us. We often think we shall be satisfied when we have a little more; but that little more enlarges and recedes as we approach it. *Enough* is an ever-receding goal. The men who have the most knowledge are the most eager for more. Those who have the largest fortunes are the most anxious to accumulate. Alexander weeps for more worlds to conquer; and Newton, who has weighed the planets in the balance of his intellect, and with cunning fingers has disentangled the solar ray and showed its various coloured threads, standing on the pinnacle of his amazing knowledge, is yet "the little child upon the shore who has found only a few shells, while the vast ocean of truth lies unexplored before him." The artist embodies the highest conceptions of his genius on canvass or in marble; but immediately his conceptions rise above themselves; he sees new beauty and grandeur in the human form; and he, too, is running towards an ever-receding goal. The same is true, only in a greater degree, of the affections. There is no home so beautiful and full of love as to satisfy every ideal affection; there is no

being so perfectly the complement of our own, that we can conceive no lack and no superfluity.

These ideals and aspirations after something which the world cannot give, are to man, in the material body and the material world, what the organization of the sparrow is to the egg. They are voices implanted in man's nature prophesying another world, that shall be adequate to his largest desires. These stirrings of a higher life within us; these surgings of mighty impulses against the walls of clay—are the struggles of the unfledged bird for a new state of being. They are not, they cannot be, the mockings of some tormenting fiend; they are the powerful voices of an all-merciful, all-wise Father, who has provided a better world for us than this—voices of love, and hope, in which He calls us to believe in that world, and prepare for it.

But, as the sparrow could not fly in the summer air, and pour forth the fulness of its own delight in song, until its organization had been effected in the shell, so neither can man enter into full consciousness of the perfections of the spiritual world, until the proper spiritual organization has been formed in the material body; and, as the bird cannot enter into its new world until it breaks its shell and escapes from it, so neither can man rise into the spiritual world until he throws off the material body, and thus breaks down the partition walls which separate him from it.

There is another legitimate deduction from these universal methods of the Divine operation, full of the greatest and surest promises of good to man. So far as we know, the plant, the bird, the animal, fully attain the ends of their being. The most perfect animal has

no thought, no desire, no impulse even, for anything beyond this world. So far as they are concerned, the declaration of the Psalmist is true—"Thou openest Thy hand and satisfiest the desires of every living thing." It is true for man also. It must be, or the whole creation is a lie. But we must take man's whole being into consideration. It is false only when we mistake the lowest and the merely rudimentary part of his nature for the whole. If you judge the plant by the blossom, or the insect by the chrysalis, you will come to the same false conclusion you do, when you judge man by his life in the material body. Everything in the universe points to the conclusion that the Lord intended, and still intends, to satisfy every spiritual want of man, as fully as He satisfies every natural want of the animal. He has made such ample and varied provisions for every possible want, that man cannot frame a hope which will not be realised; he cannot have a desire that will not be gratified; he cannot conceive a good which he will not obtain; he cannot form an ideal which will not become an actual; he cannot lift an aspiration above the level of his attainment. This is the Lord's promise in His Word—"Ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you;" and this promise is written upon the whole creation.

You have seen an animal in a good pasture lying in the shade or basking in the sun, and you knew that its desires were all satisfied; it had no dream of a want. Within the little round of its life it is content, it is full. Now, what the attainment of the animal is for the animal, will be man's attainment for man. With all his mental and spiritual faculties

increased to an inconceivable degree of scope and power; with his knowledge and affections enlarged beyond the present capacities of the highest angel, yet every want will be satisfied. He will be full. Visions of glory and beauty will dawn upon his clear vision, such as no earthly eye has seen, and no heart conceived, and he will reach them, possess them, enjoy them, and they will content him. There are only two words that express such a state—*Peace, Blessedness*. Peace within, peace with all around. Blessedness in the heart; blessedness in the understanding; blessedness in every faculty and every relation.

This is what the Lord promises us in His Word, and in His works, and it is a promise He will fulfil to the letter. But you must give Him time, and be obedient to His way. He cannot give it to you while you are in the material body. He cannot give it to you in this world, any more than He can give flight and the joy of song to the bird in the egg. It requires a spiritual world to satisfy all the demands of our spiritual faculties.

Now gather all these considerations into one; the limitations and obstructions to the soul inherent in matter; the nature of the soul itself; the universal testimony of the Divine methods in the creation; the certainty with which the Lord accomplishes His ends, with no excess of means and no lack of attainment; the Divine promises in the Word; and does not everything point to the absolute necessity of the death of the body? Is there any exception to it? No, the testimony is all on one side. The soul could not possibly attain those immeasurable heights of perfection of which it knows itself to be capable, without

freeing itself from the body. What we call death, then, is an orderly step in life. It is not a curse, but a blessing. It deprives us of no good. It introduces us to innumerable and inconceivable delights. Instead of fearing it, we should thank the Lord for it, and patiently await its coming. We should do our work here well, knowing it is the best preparation we can make for the largest blessings hereafter

LECTURE IV.

THE RESURRECTION OF MAN.

ACCORDING to the doctrines of the New Church, Death and Resurrection are the same event in different aspects. The death of the material body is the natural side of it, and consequently it is all we can see while we are in this world. Resurrection is the spiritual side. The material body is left behind and turns to dust. Man rises out of it. He is withdrawn from the body as the hand is withdrawn from a glove; and when the separation of the spiritual from the material body is fully effected, he stands complete man in the spiritual world, with all his senses and his whole organism perfectly adapted to it. He has lost no more than the sparrow loses when it breaks its shell. When the material body dies, man rises. He does not wait for unknown ages, and flit about nowhere and nobody, waiting for a general resurrection of the material body, that he may crawl back into his old prison and resume his chains. He has left nothing behind him that can ever be useful to him again. The beautiful moth never becomes a worm. The sparrow never folds its wings, closes its eyes to the new world in which it has rejoiced for a

brief summer, and becomes reinvested with its old shell. So it is with man. The material body returns to the ground whence it was taken. "Earth to earth—ashes to ashes—dust to dust." The spiritual body is raised up into the spiritual world, its proper home, where it will dwell for ever.

The statement of Swedenborg on the subject is as follows:

"When the body is no longer able to perform its functions in the natural world corresponding to the thoughts and affections of the spirit, which it has from the spiritual world, then the man is said to die. This takes place when the respiratory motions of the lungs and the systolic motions of the heart cease to act; but still man does not die; he is only separated from the corporeal part, which was of use to him in the world; for man himself lives. It is said man himself lives, because man is not man from the *body*, but from the *spirit*, since the spirit thinks in man, and thought with affection makes man. Hence it is evident that man, when he dies, only passes from one world into another.

"The spirit of man, after the separation, remains a little while in the body, but not longer than till the total cessation of the heart's action, which takes place with variety, according to the state of the disease of which man dies. . . . As soon as this motion ceases, the man is resuscitated; but this is done by the Lord alone. By resuscitation is meant the drawing forth of the spirit of man from the body, and its introduction into the spiritual world, which is commonly called resurrection."

He then goes on to say, "that man is man from his spirit, and not from his body; and that the corporeal

form is added to the spirit according to the form of the spirit and not the reverse ; for the spirit is clothed with a body according to its own form ; wherefore the spirit of man acts into the minutest particulars of the body, insomuch that the part which is not actuated by the spirit, or in which the spirit is not acting, does not live. That this is so, may be known to every one from this alone ; that thought and will actuate each and all things of the body with such entire command, that everything concurs, and whatever does not concur is not a part of the body, and is also cast out as something in which is no life ; thought and will are of the spirit of man, and not of the body."

"When man enters the spiritual world, or the life after death, he is in a body as in the world ; to *appearance* there is no difference, and he does not perceive nor see a difference. But his body is then spiritual, and thus separated or purified from earthly things, and when what is spiritual touches and sees what is spiritual, it is just as when what is natural touches and sees what is natural ; hence, a man when he has become a spirit, does not know otherwise than that he is in his body in which he was in the world, and hence he does not know, at first, that he has deceased. A man's spirit also enjoys every external and internal sense which he enjoyed in the world ; he sees as before ; he hears and speaks as before ; he also smells and tastes, and when he is touched he feels the touch as before ; he also longs, desires, craves, thinks, reflects, is affected, loves, wills, as before ; and he who delights in studies, reads and writes as before. In a word, when a man passes from one life into the other, or from one world into the other, it is as if he passed from one

place into another, and he carries with him all things which he possessed in himself as a man ; so that it cannot be said that the man after death, which is only the death of the earthly body, has lost anything of himself. He also carries with him the natural memory, for he retains all things whatsoever which he has in the world heard, seen, read, learned, and thought, from earliest infancy even to the end of life.

“But still the difference between the life of man in the spiritual world and his life in the natural world is great, as well with respect to the external senses and their affections, as with respect to the internal senses and their affections. Those who are in heaven perceive by the senses ; that is, they see and hear much more exquisitely, and also think more wisely, than when they were in the world.

“The difference of these external senses is as the difference between sunshine and the obscurity of mist, and as the difference between the light at mid-day and the shade at evening, in the world.”

Such is a concise and simple statement of the belief of the New Church concerning that change in man called resurrection. It differs from the doctrines usually received in every particular.

1. It declares that the spirit is the real and only man, and the whole of the man.

The common doctrine practically regards the body as the real man, and the spirit as some vital principle, or motive power which animates the man ; but of which, by itself, we can form no conception, and, therefore, it teaches us to look for the resurrection of the same body we deposit in the grave ; it teaches us that the spirit comes back and re-enters the material

elements newly organized, and until this reunion is effected, neither the spirit nor the body is a complete man. The New Church teaches that man is a *spirit*, and has a *material body* during the first stage of his being; the old, that man is a *material body*, and has a *spirit*.

2. The New Church teaches that the resurrection consists in the withdrawal from the material body and raising up into the spiritual world of the man himself.

The old doctrine declares that the material body is raised up from the grave, and the spirit brought back from wherever it may dwell during its separation from the body, re-enters it, and becomes its life.

3. According to the doctrines of the New Church, the resurrection takes place immediately after death. The death of the body is, indeed, caused by the resurrection of man from it.

According to the doctrines of the old Church, the resurrection of the material body is to take place at some distant period at the end of the world. The doctrines differ, then, in three particulars; the *subject* of the resurrection, the *manner* of the resurrection, and the *time* at which it is effected. The New Church believes that it is the *spirit* which is raised; the old, that it is the *body*. The New teaches that the simple act of resurrection is the *separation* of the soul from the body; the old, that it is the *reunion* of the soul and body. The New declares that man rises *immediately* after the death of the body; the old, that he will not rise until some unknown period at the *end of the world*.

Having thus stated the doctrine of the New Church concerning the resurrection, as taught in the writings of Swedenborg, and, as we believe, in the Bible, I invite

your attention to some of the Scriptural and rational grounds of this faith.

1st. We have endeavoured in a former lecture to show that man and his spirit are the same. It is necessary to keep this truth distinctly before us, that we may know what and whom we are talking about when we speak of the resurrection of man. We do not mean that man's tools ; his material mechanism ; his material garments, which were continually changing while they clothed him, are the subject of resurrection. We do not mean oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, and iron, even when cunningly woven into nerve and muscle, into brain and heart. We *do* mean that wonderful spiritual being who formed these dead elements into this delicate and complex miracle, the human body ; who lived in it ; acted through it ; carried it about in all the paths of life ; preserved it from decay ; gave it a sensitive and conscious existence, and so wielded it to his own purposes, and moulded it to his own form, that multitudes have mistaken the dead image for the living being ; and are now looking down into the grave for the re-awakening and restoration to life of those who have entered the shining portals of heaven, and who, now free from the burden of matter, are clothed with a beauty, and are enjoying a blessedness, which we who yet dwell in these tents of clay cannot conceive, and much less express.

2d. We are now prepared to examine our second point, which is—That this resurrection consists essentially in the withdrawal of man from his material body, and not in raising to life the body itself. This would follow as a necessary consequence, from our first position, that man is really a spiritual being, and

takes nothing of his humanity from the material body, not even his form. But there are positive considerations which tend powerfully to the same conclusion.

1. The original word *Anastasis*, translated "Resurrection," exactly expresses the New Church idea of the change that actually takes place in man at his resurrection. It has no such meaning as raising up to life again in this world. It means a continuance of existence after the death of the body. Our Lord's argument with the Sadducees shows that it has this meaning beyond question. But that no one may think this interpretation of the word is peculiar to the New Church, or that there is any attempt to wrest it from its true meaning, I will quote a passage from a sermon of Dr. Dwight, of New Haven, upon the Resurrection.

"This word *Anastasis*," he says, "is commonly, but often erroneously, translated *Resurrection*. So far as I have observed, it usually denotes our *existence beyond the grave*. . . . Many passages of Scripture would have been rendered more intelligible, and the thoughts contained in them more just and impressive, had this word been translated agreeably to its real meaning. This observation will be sufficiently illustrated by a recurrence to that remarkable passage which contains the dispute between our Saviour and the Sadducees. 'Then came unto Him,' says the Evangelist, 'the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection;' that is, that there is no future state, or no future existence of mankind. They declare seven brothers to have married successively one wife, who survived them all. Then they ask, 'Whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?'—in the future state? Our Saviour answers, in the resurrection, or as it should be rendered, *in the*

future state, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. 'But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?' or as it ought to be rendered, 'Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God concerning *the future life of those who are dead*, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' This passage, were we at any loss concerning the meaning of the word *Anastasis*, determines it beyond dispute. The proof that there is an '*Anastasis*' of the dead alleged by our Saviour, is the declaration of God to Moses, 'I am the God of Abraham,' &c., and the irresistible truth that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The consequence is, every one who reads the Bible knows that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were living at the time when this declaration was made. Those who die, therefore, live after they are dead; and this future life is the '*Anastasis*,' which is proved by our Saviour in this passage, and which is universally denoted by this term throughout the New Testament."

The common idea of the resurrection, namely, that it consists in bringing the spirit back from the spiritual world, and in the restoration to life of the dead bodies deposited in the tomb, is not derived from this word. It was rather put into it to make the Scripture conform to pre-conceived ideas. The word has no reference to the body.

2. But again: There is nothing said in the Bible *about the resurrection of the body*, as there necessarily *would not be* if the original term means a continuance

of life in the Spiritual World. There is much said about the continuance of life after death; or to use the common term, of the resurrection from the dead, or of the dead; but the terms resurrection of the *body* or of the *flesh* are nowhere to be found, because there is no such idea or truth in the Bible to express.

This was the idea of a certain class of Jews, and when it was expressed, at least on one memorable occasion, our Lord corrected it. When he said to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again," she answered, according to the common doctrine of the time, "I know he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." What was the reply? Was it an assent to this doctrine, as it naturally would have been if it was true? Did our Lord say, "True, the body you have deposited in the tomb would be raised up again at the end of the world. But, as a special favour, I will restore your brother to life now, though he will again pass into the tomb, and await the final resurrection?" No, nothing of this; "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whoso liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

The life and the death He referred to, could not have been the life or death of the body. They must refer to the life or death of the man himself—of his soul. It is the same as though He had said, "You are mistaken, Martha, in supposing that the body is to be raised up at the last day. The true resurrection is that of the spirit. Those who are truly alive, who live and believe in Me, can never die. And though they are dead, if they will exercise a living belief in Me, they shall live. I am," not I will be; "I am the

resurrection and the life now, to all who will receive life from Me." You see how entirely the body is ignored in this reply, as though it was of no consequence. If a man is spiritually alive now, he can never die. His separation from the material body does not touch his life any more than the change of his clothes. And if he is spiritually dead, destroying the material body will not make him any more dead. The Lord always strives to lift men above the merely natural idea; to raise them out of the grave of the natural and temporary to the spiritual and eternal. He gives a new spiritual meaning to those terms and ideas to which the sensuous-minded Jew had attached only a material one. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

This principle shows us how we must understand the 28th and 29th verses of the fifth chapter of John, which probably contain the strongest statement of the doctrine of the resurrection of the material body to be found in the Bible. "Marvel not at this," he says, "for the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." But just before he had said, "The hour is coming, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live;" and in the preceding verse, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life. He is passed from death unto life."

By those who are in their graves are evidently meant *the same as* the dead in the preceding verse, and there *it is said*, "The hour is coming, and *now is*." It is

always present. "I am the resurrection and the life." As life is received from Me, every one is raised up from the dead. He is passed from death unto life. Here as before, and everywhere, the material body is not referred to, because it is no part of the man.

But suppose we understand it as teaching the doctrine of the resurrection of the body at the last day, how can we reconcile the declaration with the clause, "the hour is coming, and now is," in the preceding verse? Who or what is meant by all who are in their graves? Are all the generations of men who have lived in this world in their graves? We have the most positive evidence that they are not. Moses and Elias are not in their graves. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not in their graves. And that multitude which no man can number, from every nation, kindred, tribe, and tongue, are not in their graves.

There are many passages in the Bible which imply or plainly speak of a resurrection. The whole scope and intent of the Revelation, contained in the word, is to teach and prove the Resurrection, the "*Anastasis*," the uninterrupted continuance of life in the spiritual world, after the death of the body, and how that life can be made the most blissful and rich in all spiritual blessings. But there is some difficulty about every passage, if by resurrection we mean the bringing back to life the material body. The passage in Job, which was once supposed to teach this doctrine, is now given up, and by common consent it is conceded that it has no reference to the resurrection of the body. And the passage in Daniel, xii. 2—"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to *everlasting life*, and some to shame and everlasting

contempt," was once claimed as teaching this doctrine. But it is now given up by the most intelligent writers upon the subject. The fatal clause in it is the words "many of them." Many does not mean all, but only a part. The words cannot refer to a general resurrection, then; and the most learned commentators confess that it has no reference to the resurrection of the dead.

The famous passage in 1 Corinthians, the last one which I shall notice, teaches a doctrine directly the reverse of the one generally entertained, and strictly in accordance with the doctrine of the New Church. Paul declares that there is a natural body, and that there is a spiritual body; that a natural body is sown and a spiritual body raised; that the body raised is not the one sown. But time fails me to enter upon a critical examination of the whole passage. The more critically and exhaustively all the passages relating to this subject are examined, however, the more fully they will be found to confirm the Doctrine, that the resurrection itself consists essentially in the withdrawal of the man himself from the material body and raising him up in the spiritual world.

There are two resurrections, as there are two deaths. The first consists in the restoration of man to spiritual life. This is truly a resurrection from death, and is effected while we live in the body in this world, by the voice of the Son of God, or the Divine truth. When the soul, dead in trespasses and sins, hears that voice and obeys it, it begins to rise from the grave of sin and falsity, and to live. It has passed from death *into life*, and will die no more for ever. This is the *essential* resurrection, and the one to which our Lord

always refers. The only effect of the death of the body upon such persons is to give them freedom and the most favourable opportunities for the exercise of all their faculties. The second resurrection is conscious introduction of all, both the spiritually living and dead, into the spiritual world. These two resurrections are so spoken of in connection with each other; the first being described under the form of the second, that it is sometimes difficult to see the full bearing of all parts of the literal statement without a knowledge of this distinction. And much of the perplexity and doubt as to the meaning of many passages which the sincerest seekers after truth have found, originates in this duality of statement and meaning. The two ideas, the resurrection from spiritual death and the continuance of life in the spiritual world, are both implied in all statements upon the subject; sometimes one truth appears more prominent than the other, but, generally, both crop out in some form. They do not in any way conflict with each other; and when the whole truth in both forms is understood, every particular passage in the whole Bible will be found to be perfectly consistent with itself, with every other passage, and with the tenor of the whole Scripture, and the doctrines of the New Church concerning the resurrection.

Right reason will always coincide with a true knowledge of Scripture. If this doctrine is genuine truth, reason will also give her cordial assent to it, and we shall find indications and prophecies of it in the created as well as the revealed world. There is no instance in *nature* of such a resurrection as the *common doctrine asserts*. But the world is full of the most

beautiful examples analogous to man's true resurrection. Indeed, every organized thing passes through analogous states. The coarse, rough calyx, is as a body to the soul of the plant in winter. Man in this world is only the bud of what he will be. The voice of Spring calls to the sleeping blossom, and it bursts the cerements of its grave, and rises up into the new world of light and heat, and blesses the earth and man with its fragrance and beauty. But the blossom is only the swaddling-clothes of the real plant, the seed containing the life, and therefore it fades and falls when the true plant is raised up into life.

The same stages of death and resurrection are still more fully exhibited in insect and animal life. The beautiful moth finds its anastasis; it is raised up from a worm, and emerges into a new world. The sparrow that flies in freedom through every field was once folded within the narrow limits of an egg. The shell was its horizon and the boundaries of its universe. But at the voice of God revealed in its own instincts, it burst the bars of its tomb, and found its resurrection and its true home in another world.

So it is with man. He attains a resurrection for his material body when he is born into this world, and a resurrection for his spiritual body when he is born into the spiritual world. So fully and clearly does the Lord teach us in the visible things around us what He is doing in the invisible within us; so clearly does He shew us in the present what He will do for us in the future.

Now in all these changes and resurrections, there is *no instance* of the dead body being raised to life. In *no case* does any created thing go back and resume

its former status. The moth never becomes a worm again. The sparrow never goes back into the shell, to reanimate it. Everything moves forward, completes the cycle of its life, and perpetuates its species. But man being essentially a spiritual, and, therefore, an immortal being, finds his resurrection by passing into another world, which is his proper home.

There are many inconsistencies and absurdities connected with the common doctrine, which its advocates have always found it impossible to reconcile or explain away, and many of them have been given up. It was once maintained, that exactly the same body deposited in the ground would be raised up. But this involves the idea that man is to be raised up with all his physical imperfections and deformities. Most persons die in old age, when the beauty and vigour of adult life are lost ; or after the body has become emaciated with disease, or crushed or mangled by accident or in battle. The particles of matter contained in one body have been incorporated into many others, and omnipotence cannot make the materials which belong to two or more bodies belong exclusively to each one.

To avoid one difficulty, some have maintained that every particle of matter that ever belonged to the body is incorporated into it at the Resurrection. But this would make those who live to old age perfect monsters. Allowing the materials of the body to be renewed once in seven years, which is the common estimate, a man who weighed one hundred and fifty pounds, and lived to be threescore and ten, would weigh twelve or fifteen hundred pounds, and Methusaleh would weigh nearly *ten tons*.

Some have tried to avoid this absurdity, and the

impossibility of the identical matter which composed the body at death, being raised up, by the theory that the same chemical elements as carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, &c., will be incorporated into the new body.

But the essential difficulty with all the theories is, that they get only a material body, whatever terms may be applied to it, or whatever imaginary perfections it may be supposed to possess; and a material body must be subject to all the limitations and imperfections of matter. It must keep man in this world; and however vigorously its advocates may deny it, the common doctrine leads to an inevitable materialism. Matter cannot be changed into spirit. If it can be, it would cease to be matter, and we do not get the resurrection of the body after all? If such a change is possible, there can be a spiritual body, and if there can, what is the use of a material one? Carry the doctrine out to its legitimate consequences and absurdities, and inexplicable difficulties close about the mind on every side, until its advocates always are compelled to take refuge in the Divine omnipotence.

3. It is not necessary, even if I had time, to dwell upon our third topic. If the first two points are true, the third certainly is; if they are not, it is of but little consequence when the material body is raised. But in all the passages of the Word upon which I have commented, you can hardly fail to see that the Resurrection must necessarily take place at the time of the death of the body. All the persons mentioned had attained their resurrection. But if any further testimony is needed, what our Lord said to the thief upon *the cross* would be conclusive: "*To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*"

In whatever light we view the subject, we are brought back to the plain, simple, and comforting truth, that man is essentially a spiritual being, that his resurrection consists in the withdrawal of his spiritual from his material body, and that this takes place at the time the material body dies. Death and the Resurrection are the same act viewed from opposite sides, and man's departure from this world is his entrance into the spiritual world, where he is to find his home and the theatre of his activities for ever. The voice of God, as it comes to us in the analogies of nature, teaches this doctrine in every plant that grows, in every insect whose life is bounded by a summer's day, and in every animal that lives; enlightened reason joyfully assents to it, and every aspiration of our souls finds in it the sure promise of the fruition of all our hopes, and especially as with the blast of a trumpet, with no uncertain sound, does the voice of God, in His Holy Word, declare it. So far as we accept it as truth, and bring it home to ourselves as a reality, earth and all its fleeting pleasure, and momentary issues fade away; life and immortality come to light; and only those attainments and possessions which will be of service to us in our final home in the eternal future, will seem worthy of our labour or our love.

LECTURE V.

MAN IN THE WORLD OF SPIRITS.

THE whole Bible assumes the existence of a Divine Being, a spiritual world, and the immortality of man. These ideas form the basis of its whole structure, and are interwoven into every part of it, but they are rarely taught in a distinct and formal manner. We are not told where the spiritual world is, nor are we distinctly instructed under what form we are to conceive it. There is but little said, except in a figurative and incidental way, about the employments of spiritual beings, their relations to each other, and their general mode of life. But the great truths are everywhere implied, that the spiritual world is a real world, that spiritual beings are real beings, and that they dwell in a state of happiness or misery according to their characters.

This method of treating these subjects has given room for the exercise of human reason and fancy, and the result has been a multitude of theories, ranging from the grossest materialism to the most ethereal and meaningless abstractions. These theories have generally been based upon some passages in the Word *which seemed* to suggest them ; and then they have

been carried out according to the fancy and constructive ability of their authors. Thus, the common idea of hell as a burning lake into which the wicked are plunged, and on whose fiery billows they are to be for ever tossed and tormented, but never consumed, is founded upon a few passages in the Bible in which fire is mentioned in connection with the punishment of the wicked. The happiness of heaven is generally thought to consist in rest from all active employment, and in the perpetual worship of the Lord. This idea is doubtless derived from some expressions in the Revelation, which represent the multitude of the heavenly host as surrounding the throne and singing songs of perpetual praise. But the more the subject is viewed in the light of reason, and the nature of man as a spiritual being, the less satisfactory these theories become. They cannot be accepted as full and final statements upon these subjects ; and the doctrines based upon them are so conflicting with each other, and result in so many contradictions of the nature of man, and the general scope and spirit of the Sacred Scriptures, that they involve the whole subject in darkness, and lead many to doubt even the existence of a conscious, real life after this. It was this very reason, as we believe, that rendered new and fuller disclosures upon this subject necessary.

In the absence of all direct and positive teaching upon these subjects in the letter of the Word, we are compelled to judge of every theory by its intrinsic probability. If a theory of future life is presented to us, which contains nothing contrary to the spirit and plain teachings of the Bible ; if it does no violence to *reason : involves no inconsistencies with itself ; satisfies*

the demands of man's nature, and is in perfect harmony with all the Divine methods of operation so far as we know them, it would seem difficult for us to reject it.

We seek this comprehensive, catholic judgment for the disclosures of the New Church. We do not ask you to deny the Bible, to reject your reason, to be blind to universal laws, or to seek refuge from any absurd conclusions in the Divine Omnipotence. Bring to their examination the acutest reason, the maturest judgment; compare them with the whole spirit of the Word, and with all the Divine methods of operation; compare them with themselves, and the more thorough, severe, and impartial your examination, the more likely you will be to see their truth.

In my former lectures I have endeavoured to shew that there are spiritual substances, and, consequently, that there can be a spiritual world, entirely distinct from this world; that man is essentially a spiritual being, organized of spiritual substances, and that as a spirit he is in the human form, that his material body receives its form from the spirit, and when it has performed its office, decays and falls off from it, as the husk falls from the corn when it is ripe, as the shell falls from the sparrow when it is ready for entrance into a new world. I have aimed to shew that every law of God, of man, and of nature, demands the death of the body and the resurrection of man into the spiritual world. Let us now endeavour to follow him into that world, learn something of its nature, and endeavour to ascertain what condition and changes *the same laws* demand for him there. I propose to *do as I have done* in previous lectures; state the

doctrines of the New Church, and give some of the reasons on which they are founded.

During the process of his resurrection from the material body, man is in a state of total unconsciousness. He falls into a profound sleep, and wakes in the spiritual world. He has no power to effect his resurrection himself. His soul does not escape from the body as gas from a vessel, by its comparative levity. His spiritual body must be withdrawn from the material body, and this separation is effected by the Lord, through the ministry of angels, by a spiritual attraction. When the delicate task is fully accomplished, without any pain or consciousness on the part of those who are undergoing the change, man is gradually and gently awaked, and he finds himself among angels and friends in the spiritual world. He is in the same form, and he does not even know that he is dead until he reflects upon what he sees around him. He has all the bodily organs he ever had. He sees, hears, and uses all his senses the same as he ever did. He talks with those present, and walks from place to place as he did when in this world. Indeed, there has been no more change in his bodily form and organization than there would have been by going from one house to another in this world. He has only thrown aside the garment of clay. The spiritual body remains the same as before.

No change in his intellectual or moral character has been effected by his death and resurrection. He knows no more and no less; he is no better and no worse. Every one takes all his memory, and all his mental faculties act the same as before. He loves, *hopes, fears, reasons, desires, reflects, forms opinions*

and expresses them. In a word, he is the same person, and he knows it.

The question naturally arises, what grounds have we for this belief?

There is nothing in the Bible contrary to this doctrine, but many things that tend to confirm it. Our Lord's promise to the thief on the cross, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," is sufficient evidence that we preserve our identity, if we do nothing more. Moses and Elias were seen on the mount of Transfiguration. John saw a vast multitude from every nation, kindred, and tongue. All the promises and threatenings of the whole Bible imply that man is the same being in the spiritual world that he was in this.

I presume all persons who believe in a future existence will admit this as an abstract truth. But most persons practically deny it, by denying to man as a spirit those qualities which constitute his personal being or identity. There is not the slightest ground for believing that a man would know *himself* if he becomes after death what a spirit is generally supposed to be. And this, without doubt, is the cause of the great fear many persons have of death. They do not know and cannot conceive what they will become.

There can be no identity or recognition where there is no form, or where the form is totally changed. Every person has some idea or conception of himself. Suppose the next time you look in a mirror you should see nothing but what a spirit is generally supposed to be, would you recognise yourself in it? Or, suppose you see a distinct human form, but totally unlike your *own*, would you not say at once, "That is not I?" *How do you recognise your friends?* By their having

the same form they had when you saw them last? If the change has been very great, you do not know them; you never know them until you see some features you remember to have seen before. The same principle applies to things as well as persons. You could not find your house to-night if it was totally changed, with everything around it. The word identity means sameness. If we do not rise into the spiritual world in the same form we possessed here, *we* shall never rise.

But not only outward form is essential to the preservation of our identity, but inward character. We must preserve our affections, our knowledge, our experience, and our memory. We preserve our identity as intellectual and moral beings, by comparing every step in our mental and spiritual progress with the last one. Gradual development is absolutely essential to the preservation of our personal being. We must be able to see how one state grows out of another, to know that we are the same beings to-day we were in the past. All the laws of man's life demand, therefore, that he shall preserve his form and character, and rise in the spiritual world the same being he was here.

You can hardly fail to see how simple and logical the doctrines of the New Church are upon this subject. They avoid all the difficulties and confusion of ideas which the prevalent beliefs produce, by directing us to look into the grave for some part of our friends, and into the spiritual world for some other part, and to some future time when the two may be re-united.

The spiritual world being here, and man himself being a spirit in the human form—in the same form as *the body*—when he is raised up into the spiritual

world, he stands there, a complete human being, having left nothing behind him but his material body. The veil of flesh is now removed from his spiritual senses, and spiritual objects and spiritual beings are now as real to every sense as natural objects were before.

Having thus endeavoured to get man fairly into the spiritual world, without losing himself as a distinct personal being, and without violence to the laws of his own nature, or any opposition to the universal methods of the Divine Wisdom, let us examine the nature of the spiritual world, and learn its relations to the intelligent beings who dwell in it.

We have already seen that, if it is anything, it is a real and substantial world. Our doctrines teach us that it is divided into three principal divisions. Heaven, the world of spirits, and hell. Heaven is the abode of the good ; hell of the evil ; and the world of spirits is a state intermediate between them. It is called the world of spirits, because those who dwell in it are called spirits, in distinction from angels or devils. The inhabitants of the heavens are angels, of the hells devils ; but all are called spirits before they reach their final home. This state is not like the purgatory of the Catholics. It is not a state of probation or punishment, though some persons suffer severely in their passage through it. Nor is it a place where the souls of men wait for the resurrection of the material body, as many believe. It is a state of judgment and preparation for the eternal home, of all who have passed from the earth. It resembles this world so fully, that when man is first raised up into it, he is not struck *with any great change*. In respect to the forms and

scenery, the change is not greater than it would be if he had removed to some other place in this world, and perhaps not so great. He finds himself a real man in a real world. He sees similar forms, as real to his spiritual senses as rock and tree ever were to his natural senses in this world. It lies next to the earth, between us and heaven or hell, and all from the earth—the good as well as the evil—must pass through it before they reach their final home.

Such, briefly, are the doctrines of the New Church upon this subject. Let us see what rational grounds we have for belief in such a world.

Heaven is a state of unsullied purity, and of that joy, peace, and blessedness, which only result from the harmonious activity of all our spiritual faculties. Every thought and affection must not only be in perfect accord with every other thought and affection in the same mind, but in all minds; and not only with the minds of all who dwell in heaven, but with the Lord from whom all this life flows. There must be no jar, no discord, no selfish or evil desire, no failure in the attainment of any end. Now, it is almost, if not quite impossible for us to conceive of such a state. We may imagine a condition of things which we think would content us, but we often find ourselves greatly mistaken, even in this world. But when we come to take all others into the account, the problem becomes much more complicated. While we love and obtain what perfectly contents and satisfies ourselves, we must, at the same time, satisfy every one else. Now, can you find a hundred persons in this world so heavenly-minded, so unselfish, so homogeneous in nature, that it would be possible for them to form such

a society? Do you know of *two* persons who have attained such perfection? But this state must be attained before we reach heaven. Do you not think the best of men and women must undergo great changes before they come into this state? Must not their understandings become greatly enlightened, and their affections elevated and purified?

It seems to be generally supposed that all that is necessary to gain entrance into heaven, is the permission of the Lord. But if the doors of heaven were thrown wide open—and they are—and the Lord should say to every one as he entered—"I freely forgive you; I will not punish you for a single sin," and all, as they left this world, should enter, do you think it would be a heaven long? We must not forget that the character of every society is formed by the members who compose it, and that we do not gain any knowledge or any goodness by the mere act of death. Is it not evident that heaven is very remote from most of us?

We must remember also, that all changes of character are effected by our voluntary agency. We must learn what is true and heavenly, and do it, from *love*, not from fear or compulsion, before we can enter heaven. The kingdom of heaven must be formed within us before we can enter into it. We find it a very slow and difficult work here; so slow and difficult that we often despair of accomplishing it.

But suppose it were possible for the Lord by His omnipresent power to transform us instantaneously into angels, do you think we should know ourselves? *I fear not.* We might be angels, but I doubt whether *we should know* that we were ever men and women in

this world. Is it rational to suppose that we can leap that mighty interval between us, as we are in this world, and what we must and shall be, if we ever reach heaven? The supposition is contrary to reason, to the nature of man, and to all known methods of the Divine Wisdom.

Think of the great multitude of human beings who are daily and hourly passing away from the earth. It is estimated that thirty-six millions of people die annually. This would be three millions a month, and a hundred thousand a day. Every twenty-four hours a hundred thousand human beings, of all ages, sexes, and conditions, pass into the spiritual world. Among that vast multitude, there are many helpless infants, children, youth; many persons in the prime of natural life; many in the decrepitude of old age. How large a portion of them are heathen, utterly destitute of any spiritual knowledge, and with very little knowledge of any kind. The infant is an infant still, the child is a child, the savage a savage. All these persons are to be provided for. We cannot suppose the Lord deserts any of his children. We cannot believe that this vast multitude of human beings, differing from each other in so many respects, each one having wants peculiar to himself, are crowded together in one promiscuous mass. They could not form a heaven; they could not form a hell; for hell as well as heaven is a state of society determined by those who compose it. They cannot be instantaneously changed into beings fit for either state, without destroying their identity, and contravening all known methods of Infinite Wisdom.

Here is a large army of souls daily marching into the *spiritual world*, every one of whom has the capa-

cities of an angel. The greater part of them are weak and ignorant; their characters have not yet been developed or permanently fixed. We can conceive of influences under which they might be brought, if they were to remain in this world, that would form them into good men and women. Can any one entertain the idea, that a Being of infinite love and wisdom fails to provide every necessary means for the accomplishment of this work, when it is the essential end for which He created them.

What is to be done with the little child? He is weak, ignorant, has many evil tendencies, but he has all the germs of angelic life. If he could remain in this world, he might develop these germs and make them a part of his real being. Does he lose his opportunity of becoming an angel, by his resurrection from the material body? He cannot become one at once, unless all the laws of the human mind are changed. He must have the means of instruction. His will must not be destroyed, for that would be the destruction of the essential human principle. He must be left in freedom, to do what he is taught. And this implies the opportunity to exercise his affections. This is the only way in which his spiritual faculties could be developed.

What becomes of the heathen, and the great number in Christian countries, who go into the spiritual world without any knowledge of spiritual truth? They are children in knowledge, though adults in years. Do you not suppose that the Lord would provide for the development of those faculties, for which they had no opportunity in this world?

Here is a man, a type of a large class, who is a

good man at heart. He means well, and strives to live a good life. But he has many evil inclinations to contend with, many bad habits to overcome. Where is there a good man or woman who has not? Where is the Christian who is not oppressed, and sometimes discouraged, as Paul was, with this conflict? Who does not find that "When he would do good, evil is present with him?" and that he is compelled to maintain a constant warfare against false and evil principles. The purest and best Christian sees more clearly than any others that he has these two opposing natures. Indeed, none but those in whom a true spiritual life has begun to germinate do see and feel this antagonism. What is to be done with that large class who embrace nearly all the good? They cannot carry any evil or impurity into heaven. And, by the same law, they cannot carry any goodness into hell. Without doing violence to their own natures, they cannot be instantaneously changed.

I know it is generally supposed that a good man leaves all his imperfections behind with the material body. But there is no ground for the belief. The body does not sin. It is just as powerless to do that before death, as afterwards. Goodness and truth, evil and falsity, are mental and spiritual qualities—not material. But suppose men were instantaneously changed at death into beings of perfect purity and holiness, do you think they would know themselves? Would they be the same beings? Suppose everything that is not heavenly to be eliminated from your will and understanding, your affection and thought, would it not create a great void? I fear there would *not be much left* of any of us. The result would be

about the same as it would to remove all the features in a deformed face but those of perfect loveliness and beauty. If the mind is a spiritual form, as we have seen that it is, it would be such a change. Who would know themselves? But the mind cannot be changed, except by its own consent and co-operation. A rock or a block of dead wood can, but living forms cannot. Such an instantaneous change, if it were possible, would so disrupture a man's whole nature, break all the fine and delicate laws of association, by which his thoughts and affections are related, and the continuity of his being is maintained, that it would destroy him. It would be like tearing out half the nerves of his body.

Between the vast multitude who are continually passing into the spiritual world, and the repose, purity, and perfection of heaven, there is, therefore, a greater or less distance that must be passed over. Many evil and false principles must be put off, many truths must be learned, and many good affections must be more fully developed. The good and the evil, so intimately bound together and consolidated by habit, must be disentangled; and this must be done so gently, that our spiritual organization will not suffer by it. It must be done by our voluntary co-operation. In the larger part of spirits the whole character must be formed. And we have no evidence that the laws of mind, in that world, are changed in this essential principle. Character is formed by the same process there as here.

To what conclusion, then, are we inevitably brought? Do not heaven, hell, the nature of man and of the Lord, and all spiritual and Divine laws, so far as we *know* anything about them, *demand* an intermediate world in which spiritual beings may be instructed and

prepared for their final home, and led to it? Is there any escape from this conclusion? It may be denied. So you may deny that the sun shines. You may say that the Lord has omnipotent power, and can effect these changes in a moment. But you have no evidence that He will. On the contrary, from all we know of the Divine methods, we have no right to infer that He abandons the relations of cause and effect, and acts in a purely arbitrary manner in the spiritual world more than here.

Admitting, then, as I think every rational mind must, that there is this intermediate state between us and our eternal home, we can see how beautifully it harmonizes with all we know of the Divine operations, and how clearly it shows the protection and merciful care of the Lord for His children, in every stage of their existence, and how consistent the theory is with all we have said in our previous lecture, concerning the nature of man as a spiritual being and the realities of a spiritual world.

That world is here, is everywhere around us, and is separated from us only by the thin veil of matter. We are in it now, though unconscious of it. Man is a spirit in the human form, and when the veil of matter is withdrawn, it reveals to him the spiritual world in which he was living before. He has not gone to any remote place. He is not changed. He sees the beings who were around him, and just as near him, before the veil was withdrawn from his eyes, as they are now. He does not go among strangers, and find everything new and wholly different from what he has seen and known before. Says Swedenborg:

“The first state of man after death is similar to his

state in this world. He has a similar face, similar speech, and similar moral and external life ; hence it is that he knows no otherwise than that he is still in the world, unless he adverts to those things which present themselves, and to those which were said to him by the angels when he was first raised up, namely, that he is a spirit. Thus one life is continued into the other, and death is only the passage."

Who cannot see in this a kind and merciful regard for man ; such provident care as infinite love must give to every one ? You could do no less for your children. Your weak, imperfect human love would not only lead you, but would make it delightful to you, to do all in your power to provide your children with all the means for their instruction and comfort ; to secure friends for them if they were going far away from you into some foreign country. Will not infinite love do as much ? It follows, from all we have said, that this world is the place of reunion among friends who have been separated by death. Being in the same form as when they were in this world, their friends can recognise them. If they were nothing but what spirits are generally supposed to be, such recognition would be impossible. But if they have the same form and the same features, and if all persons carry with them all things of their memory, so that the most trivial incident they have ever known or seen can be recalled to them, it would follow that they could hardly fail to meet and be recognised by their friends.

When we found that we were real human beings, in a substantial human form, and were in a real world, *our first thought* would naturally be about our friends *who had gone before us*. Would not the mother,

whose children had been removed before her, first inquire for them, and rejoice with unspeakable delight when they were restored to her? Would not the wife or husband, bound to each by the strongest and tenderest ties, but long separated by death, seek each other and rejoice in being once more united? Could it be otherwise? Friend would seek friend, and all whose lives had been united by common pursuits and common affections, would find each other, and according to the mutual affinities of their natures they would associate together.

This would necessarily result from a universal law of spiritual life, a law that operates in this world as well as in the spiritual. When we think of another, we imagine how he looks; we present him before us. If we were in the spiritual world he would actually stand before us. Thought is spiritual presence. Suppose, for example, a mother, when she was fully aware that she was in the spiritual world, should think of some beloved son or daughter; she would have in her mind a perfect picture of her child, and the being who was the counterpart of that picture would stand before her, not merely as an image in a mirror, but as a real presence, and would greet her and embrace her with as ardent an affection as ever in this world.

There friend meets friend; families, apparently broken up by death, are again reunited; the child is restored to the bereaved parent, and all whose hearts have been bound together by mutual affection find each other and associate together, according to their spiritual affection for each other in this world. What a comforting hope does this truth hold out to every *bereaved heart!*

But while the Lord has mercifully provided that the change from this world to the spiritual world should appear to be very small at first, that there may be no break in the continuity of our being, the real change is very great. We are free from the impediments of the material body. We throw off the burden we have carried so long, and the spiritual body becomes subject to spiritual forces alone. The senses are uncovered. No dead matter comes between them and spiritual objects, and their acuteness and delicacy are wonderfully increased.

A veil is taken away from all the mental faculties, the perception becomes acute, the understanding clear, the reason sharp to discern all the relations of various truths; ideas can be perfectly represented to the senses in spiritual forms, and the mind has every facility for rapid and comprehensive development; and though the distance to our final home is great, we may soon pass over it. That depends, however, upon how much we have to unlearn, which is always a more difficult task than to learn, and how much affection we have for the truth. Some are but a few days in throwing off all that is not homogeneous to their essential characters, while others struggle along for years. Children learn far more rapidly than in this world, and they have this immense advantage, they learn only the truth, and consequently they have nothing to unlearn; every new truth is a step forward. They have teachers, also, who know how to touch the secret springs of their life, and to adapt their instruction in the most perfect manner to every state. And they are not only *taught the truth*, but they are continually applying it *to life*. They use it as they learn it. Thus they are

prepared to become angels in heaven. It is necessary that they should begin life in this world in a material body, but it is not necessary that they should remain long in it.

This world of spirits is common ground for all who dwell in the spiritual world. The angels visit it when they can be of any service to any spirit who dwells there, and there is open, conscious, and delightful intercourse with those heavenly beings. In that world, also, they are near to us, for that world is here, and they are continually performing kind offices for us, doing far more for us than our best friends here can do ; and when we are about to leave this world, and take the next great step in life, they stand around us and assist us with the most loving and assiduous care.

Thus, in our journey towards our eternal home, we are attended by the purest and noblest beings, and there is no break in the continuity of our life. From conception to birth, from birth into this world to our birth into the spiritual world, and from that through eternity, every step follows by natural sequence from the preceding. There are no fathomless gulfs to cross, no steps to retrace, no dispersion of any elements that will ever be essential to us. We shall always leave behind everything that has ceased to serve us. We shall always find the world we dwell in keeping even pace with the development of our spiritual natures, that we may have the fullest and widest scope for the exercise of every faculty, and the attainment of every joy.

LECTURE VI.

THE JUDGMENT OF MAN.

THE subject to which I invite your attention this evening has been the theme of much eloquent discourse. The poet and the orator have delighted to portray its tragic and terrible scenes ; to hold them up as a warning to the wicked, and to present them as powerful motives to repentance and amendment of life. It is regarded by multitudes as the greatest and most dreadful event in human history ; as the culmination of all human affairs, and the final settlement of all human conditions. It is the final settlement. Judgment is pronounced upon every human being ; it will be pronounced upon you and upon me, and from that judgment there can be no appeal. Its decisions are irrevocable. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, to us to know how the trial is to be made, and according to what principles the judgment will be rendered.

Before entering directly upon the subject, let us glance backwards, and take our bearings from the principles we have endeavoured to establish, and see *what light* they throw upon the question before us. I *do not* wish to state personal opinions merely. No

opinion or theory is of any value unless it is true; unless it is according to the order established in the nature of man by Infinite Wisdom. If we can find that order, we shall find the truth, we shall find harmony; and so long as we follow it, we can never go astray.

In my former lectures I have aimed to show that spirit is a substance, and is capable of existing in various organic and inorganic forms; that there can be, and that there is, a real and substantial spiritual world; that man is essentially a spirit in the human form, organized of spiritual substances; that death is really his resurrection from the material body, and a regular and orderly step in life—a step he would have taken if he had never sinned; that he rises in the world of spirits the same being with the same character that he left this world. He has the same form, the same features, the same knowledges, and the same affections. The infant is an infant, the youth is a youth; the ignorant gain no knowledge, the wise lose none. The savage is a savage still. The evil have the same evils, and the good abhor wickedness, and love purity and truth the same as ever.

These human beings, in all states of moral, intellectual, and spiritual character, are pouring into the world of spirits more than sixty a minute. At this rate the whole population of this vast city would be removed in ten days. If this grand levy of death was limited to this country alone, in one year it would take every man, woman, and child, and leave these great cities and this vast territory without inhabitant. These people, according to our belief, are never to return to this world. The material body is never to be resumed. Their *resurrection* is already accomplished. Their

judgment must, therefore, take place in the world of spirits, where all great judgments have been and will be effected. The judgment which John describes in the Revelation took place in the spiritual world.

What is to be done with this great, seething, incongruous mass of humanity? If the Lord is a Being of infinite wisdom and mercy, He could not permit this vast multitude to remain promiscuously together. This would be a most terrible fate, unless their natures have become totally changed. If they are nothing but vital principles, or mere shadows of a shade, flitting around in the empty realms of space, being nobody and nothing, they would need no care. But if they are, as we believe, real human beings, with human hearts throbbing with human desires; with intellects thirsting for truth; with affections hungering for love; with passions stimulating them to intense activity; they must come under the power of law, and be arranged into societies, in which each individual will sustain some definite relations to all others. Is it not so? They could not live together in this world without some discrimination of character, arrangement into classes, and the establishment of definite relations; and unless they lose their individuality, they cannot, there. Happiness would not be possible with such a commingling and contact of incongruous elements.

But besides this assemblage of opposite and repellent characters, there are many opposing and inharmonious elements in individual minds. There are few, if any, who are so good that they have no evils and falsities; and there are few, if any, who are so wicked that they have not some apparently true principles and good *traits of character*. A great number have no estab-

lished character; infants and children certainly have none. Our happiness depends upon the degree and quality of our affections, and their harmonious activities. There can be no heaven where there is no knowledge, and no affection, or where the various affections are in conflict with each other.

The nature of man, when he rises in the world of spirits, requires that these conflicting elements shall be eliminated from his character. All his progress depends upon it. It requires also that the good and evil shall be separated, and that only those of congenial characters shall associate with each other. The happiness of the evil as well as the good requires this, and the Lord regards their happiness as much as he does that of the good. He has declared that He is kind to the evil and to the unthankful. A wicked man is never so unhappy as when he is compelled to live in the society of the good. He is compelled to act under restraint. His evil principles are continually assaulted. But let him get among his companions, and he feels that he regains his freedom, for he can act out freely his desires. He is less miserable, also, when his whole character is evil and false, than when it is composed of conflicting elements. We see abundant evidence of this truth in this life. A thoroughly bad man, a man who loves evil, and has persuaded himself that evil is good and the false true, is not so miserable as the man who knows what is good and true, but loves what is evil and false. The man who believes it is right to make the best bargain for himself that he can, as many men do, is delighted when he overreaches another and makes money out of him; while another, whose greed of gain overcomes

his principles, would be tormented by his consciousness of having done wrong. It is of the Lord's mercy, therefore, that the character of the evil as well as the good shall become homogeneous, and that the conflict between them shall cease, when it can be of no more service to man.

In this world every one has two characters, a real and an apparent one. A bad man can appear to be very good. He can be very polite. He can assume all the airs of virtue and innocence; be kind and attentive to others; he can even preach and pray and exhort others to live a good life. Every one can conceal his real feelings. He can speak differently from what he thinks, even when he has no intention of deceiving. A good man knows he has two natures. Two opposite characters are struggling in him for the mastery. In the New Church we call these two characters the internal and the external man. The internal is the real man. The external sometimes acts in harmony with the internal, and sometimes does not. We know from our own experience, from observation and history, that the internal and real character gradually gains the ascendancy even in this world, and brings the external, and even the body, into conformity with it to some extent. Vice graves its ugly lineaments on the face so clearly, that every one can see them. The habitual exercise of a pure and good affection, changes even a homely face into its own likeness. This work must continue to go on until the external and internal become one, and the whole being is perfectly homogeneous. Every one can see *that no one could enter heaven until this perfect unity between the external and the internal was effected.*

This external man is not the material body. We carry it with us when we go into the spiritual world, and when we are first raised up we can pretend to be what we are not. The hypocrite is a hypocrite still; and though a wolf in nature, he may and would try to deceive others by putting on the sheep's clothing of goodness and truth. The man who has been externally religious and devout, hoping thereby to gain entrance into heaven, though evil at heart, will still be devout. Every one carries his whole character with him. His character is himself.

The whole question of judgment is simply the arrangement of these people into societies; bringing them into true and orderly relations to each other, and leading them by their own affections to their final abode. I say leading them by their own affections, for the Lord always respects a man's personality. He never violates his freedom. That is the essential human principle, and to destroy that would be to destroy the man himself.

Our doctrines teach us that this judgment is effected in the following manner. When man first rises in the spiritual world, he is received by the angels with the utmost kindness, whether he is good or evil. All are welcomed alike. Every attention is paid to them, and everything is done for them, that it is in the power of the angels to do. When the persons find they are in a real world, and are themselves real human beings, they begin to inquire about heaven, and desire to know whether they are likely to gain entrance into it. The angels then instruct them concerning the nature of heaven and heavenly happiness. *Here the real character begins to show itself.* Those

who have the kingdom of heaven within them, that is, those who love the principles which constitute a heavenly life, listen with delighted attention to what the angels tell them ; while the evil, who have no real love for goodness and truth, are listless and inattentive, and desire to turn to other subjects. Those who have an angelic nature delight to remain with the angels and be instructed by them ; but those who are evil at heart grow uneasy and restless, and desire to leave them ; which they are always permitted to do. But others of a different genius, and better adapted to their states, attend them and introduce them to various societies, where they remain as long as it is agreeable to them, and when they desire it, they depart to others, and they continue to do this, until they find those who are in a similar state of affection, and consequently congenial to them.

This change from one society to another is not accidental, nor is it effected in an arbitrary manner. But they are drawn by a spiritual attraction ; by the secret but powerful affinities of their natures. They are also at the same time undergoing great personal changes. They are in a world where all spiritual forces operate more directly and powerfully upon them than in this. The ruling love rapidly subdues all things to itself. The will and the understanding become united. The external becomes subject to the internal, and the perfect form of it. If the essential character is evil, it will be acted out in speech and deed. All restraints will be cast off. There will be no regard for public opinion, no shame for their wickedness. They will rather glory in it.

The will and the understanding being united, they

cannot even think of anything good and true, and the whole form becomes changed into the similitude and perfect expression of their evil wills. The same principles apply to those who are interiorly good. All which is not in accordance with their ruling love, which is essentially love to the Lord and the neighbour, is put off. They are freed from everything which restrained its activities. Their whole form becomes the similitude of their affection. It glows in their faces, and every feature becomes moulded into a heavenly beauty. It is heard in the tones of the voice, which express it in every modulation. It speaks in every limb and motion of the body. The whole form is the embodied and varied expression of the essential character. Thus the good and the evil are separated and drawn away from each other by the inevitable attractions and repulsions of their natures. And the great gulf that finally separates them is in their souls. "They are judged according to the deeds done in the body," that is, according to their characters. Their allotment is not in any sense arbitrary. They choose their own lot. And the Lord does all he can for the evil as well as the good. But what He can do for each one depends upon what he can receive.

This is a very brief statement of the manner in which, according to our doctrines, every one is judged. Let us now examine some of the reasons on which this doctrine is founded.

It is executed with the most delicate and perfect regard to man's freedom. That is never violated. He is not forced to any course of conduct or bound to any society against his will. He is not driven away from *heaven and the Lord*. On the contrary, every effort

is made to bring him into communion with the good, and to make him happy. His identity and the continuity of his being is preserved. Instead of losing it, he becomes more perfectly himself: all that is extraneous to him is discarded; every thought and desire acts in perfect harmony, and even the outward form is the exact similitude of the internal character.

It is in perfect harmony with all we know of the nature of man as an intellectual and spiritual being. It is only carrying out to perfection, under the most favourable conditions, those spiritual laws which we see in full and universal operation here, and which, if man continues the same being, must operate in the spiritual world.

We know, for example, that we are drawn together in this world by similarity of tastes, habits, pursuits, and character. It is true, there is much that is arbitrary and factitious in our associations, and there are many obstacles that prevent those of similar natures from finding each other and coming together. But we are always struggling against them, and endeavouring to overcome them. A knowledge of the same mechanical employment, or the study of the same science, the practice of the same profession or art, draws people together into societies, and more or less intimate association, and forms a common ground on which they can stand. When the tastes and habits are similar, the union is more intimate, and its bonds are stronger. The more interior the ground of sympathy, the more powerful the attraction. Thus, those who love the same spiritual truths, find in them a most powerful bond of union. These fine and delicate but powerful affinities are to men what attraction is to

matter. They are universal in their operation in every plane and degree of the creation. It is the Divine method of combining all beings and all things into some degree of unity. There are many obstacles to this unity from interior grounds in this world, owing to our selfish and worldly loves; and we are compelled to seek by outward restraints and force, by external laws and arbitrary punishments, a kind of formal or legal unity. It is, however, at the best, a very external and imperfect bond.

Can any one suppose that the Lord abandons His universal methods, embodied in rock and plant, in beast and bird, and in the inmost nature of man, a law so perfect that no one can escape from its influence; a law that is self-executing? Does the Lord abandon this law, reverse His own methods, when man comes into a world where there would be no obstacles to their perfect operation? How can any rational mind entertain so absurd an idea!

The doctrines of the New Church simply carry out this universal principle to its legitimate conclusions. They have the logic of the Divine order as it is embodied in the creation and in the hearts and minds of men. It is a conclusion also which every good and every wicked man must desire, if he understands his own nature. A wicked man cannot be happy in the presence of the good. Heaven would be a perfect hell to him. What delight could a supremely worldly and selfish man find in loving the Lord and the neighbour? In doing good to others? What pleasure could the impure find in purity? the proud in humility? the ambitious and tyrannical in serving others? *Their whole nature must be reversed before they could find*

any delight in these heavenly virtues. What we inmosty and really love is what we call good. It is and ever must be the measure of our good, and must determine its quality. We can no more escape from it than we can escape from the laws of gravitation. Men desire to escape from hell because it is a place of torment ; and to go to heaven because they think it is a place of happiness. But they forget that what is happiness for one is torment to another. They forget that freedom from punishment is not happiness. If every law was abolished in the land, and every penitentiary levelled with the ground, it would have no effect in making wicked men delight in what is good. They would rejoice, no doubt, that they could freely indulge in their wicked desires. But these would soon react upon them in some form of punishment, and in the end they would gain no happiness by it. No. If those heavenly principles, which constitute the kingdom of God, are not formed within us—if we have not made them our own, by actual life—we can never taste a heavenly joy. We pronounce judgment upon ourselves in the spiritual world, in the same way we do in this world. The wicked man seeks hell there as he does here, because he is drawn to it by his infernal delights—the only delights he is capable of enjoying ; and he is drawn to it by the current of his desires, as a vessel is drawn to the ocean by the current of a stream.

The change which takes place in their own persons, by which each one becomes externally the form of his own interior affection, is also the effect of laws *which we see in universal operation here ; and when carried out to their legitimate effects, they must pro-*

duce the results our doctrines ascribe to them, unless they are arrested in their course in some miraculous manner, and the whole nature of the human mind is changed. The soul being an organized form, expresses its thoughts and affections by changes of form, and even the material body conforms to its action. Under the influence of powerful passions the material body seems to be, as it were, fused in their fires, and cast into their mould. The same affection or passion always expresses itself in a similar form; and those forms are universally recognised as the natural expression of the corresponding affection. All representative art in painting and sculpture is founded upon this immutable law. The mind is the great sculptor, and line by line traces its own habitual moods and states of affection upon the body, and moulds it into its likeness. Every passion and affection leaves its own marks. Invisible or evanescent at first, they gradually come out in clearer lines and more permanent forms, until the whole body becomes changed into their similitude, and the hidden affection is spread like a banner over the face, and the secret thought is proclaimed in every tone of the voice and movement of the limbs.

If this is true of so hard and intractable a substance as the material body, how much more must it be true of those spiritual substances which yield readily to the plastic forces of the will? If a man in this world who habitually indulges in any lust is gradually but surely changed into the forms of that lust, so that he becomes the embodiment of it, how much more will the spiritual body become permanently moulded into the exact image and likeness of the interior and real affection?

When our doctrines teach, therefore, that every essentially wicked man becomes the form of his own evil, so that it is written all over him; flashes from his eye, croaks and grates in his voice; forms its infernal ugliness in every line of the face, twists the limbs and knots the muscles into its own deformities, and makes the whole spiritual organization the embodiment of its inverted, disorderly, mis-shapen and repulsive self, they only state a universal law; a law that the child understands; a law that you judge and act from every day. And if it is a punishment too awful to contemplate, to be for ever the embodiment of some infernal lust—to be so hideous and repulsive to every pure and good being that they would shrink from us with horror—we cannot say it was a punishment inflicted by the Lord. He has ever done all in His power to save us from it. The law is beneficent in its action. It is the same law that makes the angel the embodiment of a loveliness and beauty which no words can describe and no art can adequately represent.


If these changes in the external form do actually take place in the evil and the good until the external and the internal become homogeneous, you can readily understand that it would take no Divine edict and Almighty power to separate them. They would be a terror to each other. They would flee from each other, and thus the sheep would be divided from the goats, and each would seek his own companions, and his own home. And it would be done without the violation of his freedom; it would be accomplished by means of it. There would be no violation or *suspension* of universal laws, and the end would be

perfectly accomplished, and by the simplest means, as the Lord always accomplishes His end. The book of each one's life is opened, for the Book of Life is the internal and real character, and each one is judged out of the things written in that book ; and all that it contains has been written by the deeds done in the body. Thus every one is judged according to his deeds. These books are opened as the Lord opens every book of life, not in a forcible and arbitrary manner, but by the orderly and harmonious development of what is really written in them.

This method of judgment is perfectly illustrated by the Divine methods we see in operation everywhere around us. Here are two seeds somewhat similar in outward form, perhaps ; but internally they are totally different. How shall we judge them ? How shall we estimate their true value and assign them their proper place in the paradise of the garden, the orchard, the field, or the hell of fire ? Shall we weigh them ? Shall we measure them ? Shall we compare their colours and form ? Shall we send them to the chemists or examine them by any outward test ? They would all fail. By none of these methods could we discover their real character, which is written in invisible lines on the delicate and folded leaves of their closed book. There is only one way to learn their character, and that is to open the book and read their past history and the sure prophecy of the future, every event of which is written there. But how shall we open the book, sealed with seven seals ? And if we could open it, how shall we read what is invisible to mortal eye, and written in forms which no finite mind can understand ? *How can we compel or persuade them to give*

up their history? We will plant them. The sun and the rain and the secret forces that pervade the earth and penetrate all things will loose their seals and open the book. We put them in a rich soil and a genial climate. When we first plant them, they have the same form as ever. But soon they begin to change. They may seem to perish; but they do not. A little stalk pushes itself above the ground, and delicate leaves begin to unfold from it. You cannot yet tell whether it is vine, or shrub, or tree. You give to each plant the best culture you can. You use no partiality. Both grow. Branches push out from the increasing stem. Summer and winter pass, and yet you may not be able to read what is written in the book of their lives. In time their inward forms unfold into leaves; but every twig and leaf of the one is armed with thorns which pierce you. They cover themselves with the glory of blossoms. Both fill the air with odours, but the odour of one is foetid and poisonous; the other sweet, delicate, and grateful. You now begin to discover their real character. They are proclaiming it to every breeze. They mature their fruit. The one is pungent, bitter, poisonous, and fills every one who eats with pain and disease; the other is sweet, delicious, wholesome, nourishing; gives delight and health to every one who partakes it. Now the book is opened; the meanings of its characters are all so plainly revealed, that beast and bird, and even insect and worm, can understand them. "By their fruits ye shall know them." How simple and orderly the process! How inevitable the result! There is no chance for escape. There is no room for error.

So the Lord judges man. He is not arraigned



before some awful tribunal, surrounded with inconceivable terrors, every evil thought and sinful act of his whole life brought before his consciousness, and made to testify against him; he has no formal, legal trial according to an arbitrary law, like a criminal before a civil court. Nor is the judgment pronounced before the assembled universe, in tones of thunder, and with flashes of fierce wrath, that the face of the poor sinner may be covered with confusion and shame, and his soul filled with awful terrors. His Creator, his Father, his Saviour, who has ever loved him with an infinite love, does all He can for him. He gives him every opportunity to show the best he is, and to obtain the highest good he can receive. He does not drive him away; he goes away of his own accord, in the pursuit of what he regards as his highest good. The Lord and the angels do not close the doors of heaven against him. He has closed them against himself by not having them open in his own heart, as the man in this world would close the gates of the sun against himself by putting out his own eyes. The Lord does not seek to expose him for the purpose of putting him to shame, but he gives him every facility for proving what he really is, by becoming the form of his ruling or essential love, that he may find his own place and be recognised in it; that he may not be a torment to others, and that they may not be a torment to him. The Lord does not condemn him; he condemns himself. The Lord loves him, and would gladly draw him to himself, and pour into his heart the glowing currents of His own life. But that would torment and consume him. So he does the *best He can for him*; and He does it according

to the laws of His immutable and infinitely wise order.

Can you conceive of a better method of trial and judgment than this? It is in perfect accordance with infinite love. The tenderest pity and mercy itself could do no more. It is as certain in its results as infinite wisdom and omnipotent power can make it. The wicked can no more fail of condemnation, than the evil seed can fail of bearing evil fruit. By the operation of the same principles, those who have any love for goodness and truth cannot fail to receive all that they have the capacity to enjoy. The result is inevitable, and the Divine goodness, justice, and mercy, are equally displayed in the method and the result.

You will observe also, that according to this method of trial and judgment, the result is pre-determined in this world, for it is in this world that the character was formed. The book was written here; as the history of the future plant, as it is embodied in the seed, was written in the tree that bore the seed. The world of spirits is not a place of probation, but simply a world where many obstructions are removed, and many influences, more powerful and better adapted to the reduction of every external principle to perfect harmony with the essential ruling love, can be brought to bear upon every soul.

You will see also that it abates none of the real terrors of a final judgment. If it is not attended with the picturesque and sublime, and I may add impossible scenes, which are generally associated with this great *event*, it is, if possible, more terrible and certain in its *results*, and much more consonant with all we know

of the Divine Laws, and with the infinite mercy of the Lord. And in its results it is in perfect harmony with the Sacred Scriptures, and in its forms and methods also when they are properly understood,

In discussing this subject I have endeavoured to adhere to my simple plan, which was to take certain principles, generally admitted in some form to be true, and carry them out to their legitimate consequences, and in this manner show that the doctrines of the New Church are based on the immutable laws of the Divine Order ; and so far as we know, that they are in perfect harmony with them.

I have not quoted largely from the Bible, even when I might have done so, nor from any other book, because I have not sought to establish a doctrine by any other authority than that of the truth itself. I may fail in so arduous an undertaking. I doubtless shall fail in the opinion of some of you. But you will all acknowledge that, if any doctrines of spiritual truth can be established upon the immutable order of the Divine Wisdom, and can be shown to be in perfect harmony with all the Divine methods, so far as they come under our observation ; and if they are in perfect consonance with the Sacred Scriptures, they must take their place with the mathematics and other established sciences, and carry irresistible conviction of their truth to every rational mind. We believe the doctrines and philosophy of the New Church have this basis, and we can conceive of no greater service to humanity than to make them known, and to show the true grounds on which they are to be received.

LECTURE VII.

MAN'S PREPARATION FOR HIS FINAL HOME.

IT was the aim of my last lecture to show that the judgment of every one takes place after the death of the material body, and his resurrection into the world of spirits; according to the saying of the Apostle, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment." The world of spirits is, therefore, the august judgment-hall, where man's trial is held, and the verdict rendered. He is not, however, arraigned before any tribunal, and acquitted or condemned according to any arbitrary law. He is simply placed in the most favourable conditions—conditions which could only be found in the spiritual world—for the evolution of his real character. The good man is drawn into the societies of the good by the power of his spiritual affinities. By the same power the wicked man is attracted to those of a nature similar to his own. At the same time, the external and the internal character become united. Everything is cast aside which is not in perfect harmony with the ruling love. Every one speaks as he thinks, and acts as he desires; and finally becomes the perfect form of his own good *or evil*. The features of his face, the tone of his voice, *the expression of his eye, his gestures, his walk, and*

his whole form and deportment, are the perfect embodiment and expression of his will. This great change is not effected in an arbitrary manner by Omnipotent power, but in perfect accordance with laws which we see in constant operation in this world. Each person condemns or acquits himself by simply becoming what he really is. The wicked man throws off all his disguises; the good man is freed from all the natural evils which he had combated in this life, but from which he could never entirely free himself. And as the real character becomes known, unlike natures are repelled from each other, and like are attracted to like. In this way the judgment is effected, and the sentence pronounced by each one upon himself. The wicked are condemned out of their own mouths; by their own form, by their own acts; by their own choice, and of their own accord, they go to their own place. All the preparation they need is simply to be stripped of all their disguises. They need no instruction in the evil and false, and they will receive none in what is good and true.

But with the good, and with all who have not confirmed themselves in evil, who have not established a decidedly evil character, it is not so. Being essentially good, or having the capacities for the reception of the Divine life, which have not become destroyed or permanently obstructed by evil, they can receive truth corresponding to the state of their affections. They enter upon a third state, which is a state of instruction and special preparation for heaven. This is the topic of our discourse to-night. I am to shew the necessity for instruction, its nature, and the methods by which it is given.

The necessity for instruction is evident from the nature of heaven, and the state of those who are to be introduced into it. Heaven is not merely escape from the punishment of sin. If the Lord should offer a free pardon to every one, it would not make him any better. It would not form the kingdom of heaven within him. It would not create a single heavenly affection, or give the understanding a single truth. Heaven is not a negative, but a positive state. When we are weary, we think of heaven as a place of rest; and by rest most persons mean inaction, or at least freedom from the labours, the cares, the anxieties and disappointments of this life. And so it is. But this is only what it is not; the causes of pain which are not there. Permanent inaction is not rest; it is death. It is blindness in the eye, deafness in the ear, darkness in the intellect, and torpor in the heart. The rest of heaven is not inaction, but the harmonious and orderly activity of all the spiritual faculties; an activity which does not exhaust, but rather increases our powers. All delight originates in some faculty of the will or of the understanding. Heaven, then, must depend upon what we love, what we know, and our ability to carry our will into successful effect.

A little reflection upon what constitutes the essential elements of happiness, will make this clear to our minds. We are happy when we attain what we desire or love. There are three things, then, essential to happiness: the will or love, which gives rise to the desire to obtain certain ends, which we call good; the understanding or truth, which shews us how to *obtain them*; and the actual attainment of the ends *we seek*. If either of these elements is wanting, we

fail of happiness. If there is no will, there is no motive power, and there will be no action, though there may be the greatest amount of knowledge. If there are ardent desires and little wisdom, we must be subject to perpetual failure. If there is a powerful will and extensive knowledge, but some physical or other hindrance which prevents their ultimation in act, the whole soul is filled with pain. The utter inability to obtain the gratification of our desires is the most prolific cause of our unhappiness.

Supposing these essentials to be secured ; then the degree of our happiness will be measured by the purity and largeness of the will, and the extent of the understanding. For example : Here is a man of feeble will and little knowledge. He has but few wants, and those are easily satisfied. He is contented with little. He is happy according to the degree of his desires, and the extent of his knowledge. Another man has a powerful will, and a corresponding understanding. He has a wide range of affinities and tastes. He enjoys art, delights in music, has a keen perception of natural beauty, an ardent love for science, enters with real zest into a wide intercourse with the wise and good ; is a warm friend, and his whole soul is attuned to the refined and delicate joys of domestic life, and all his faculties are alive to everything beautiful, true, and good in nature and man. A person with such endowments may enjoy more in one day than the other in a year.

Our happiness in this or the spiritual world, then, must depend upon the breadth and depth and purity of our affections ; a corresponding extent of knowledge ; *and the ability to attain the ends our affections*

desire. When the will, the understanding, and the ultimate effect correspond, and act in perfect harmony, our happiness will be in proportion to their extent. The larger our affections, the wider the range, and the more various our affinities, the more numerous and exquisite must be our joys.

Man's spiritual nature consists essentially of the will and the understanding. The will is the receptacle of good, and the understanding of truth. The happiness and peace of heaven consist in the perfect union of the will and the understanding. As they expand they must keep equal pace with each other, or the balance of force is lost, and the harmony and peace are destroyed. As the affections expand by exercise, knowledge must correspondingly increase. We must be learners, then, for ever. The moment we cease to be capable of gaining more truth, we reach the limits of our happiness, and either remain stationary, or, if our desires increase, as they must, we begin to be tormented with disappointments.

Now, if we revert to the actual condition of persons who have passed into the world of spirits, and who have not confirmed themselves in evils, we shall see the absolute necessity for instruction.

A very large part are infants and children, who have no knowledge of spiritual things, and no established character, either good or evil. Great numbers also are children in knowledge and spiritual life, though adult in natural age. They have never sinned against light. They never had any rational knowledge of their spiritual natures, and their accountability to God, nor *any means* of obtaining it. This, we know, must be *the condition* of by far the greatest number of persons,

when they leave this world. They have lived according to the knowledge they had ; perhaps have lived more fully in accordance with it than those who have had much greater light. To say the least, they have not formed any character in determined opposition to the truth, for they have had no means of doing it. They are, therefore, substantially in the same state as children. Many Christians have lived good lives, but have believed in some false doctrine. They have been honest and sincere in their opinions ; they have believed what they were taught in childhood ; what they have learned from men, whom they regarded as thoroughly informed upon all spiritual subjects. But they are mistaken.

We know that this is so. We know that our own views of the same doctrines change. We call the doctrine by the same name perhaps, but it is not the same doctrine to us that it was once. No man but the most narrow bigot can deny that there are good men in all religious denominations ; and no rational mind can admit that the belief of every good man and woman is true in every particular, because they are exactly opposite in some points. It necessarily follows that they will need instruction.

But even the most intelligent minds are in doubt upon many subjects concerning spiritual things. There are very few persons who, by their own confession, have any distinct, and much less any rational idea of the nature of the spiritual world, of heaven and hell, and of what they themselves will be after death. Now, if it is true, as I have endeavoured to shew, that the spiritual world is a real world, and that *men are real human beings*, having gained no know-

ledge and lost none by death, the conclusion is inevitable, that there would be very few, if any, who would not need instruction. They would have the same belief on first entering the spiritual world that they had when they left this. They cannot enter heaven with any falsity, for, by the very nature of heaven, every thought and affection must be in perfect harmony. Knowledge is not gained by mere entrance into the spiritual world. They would adhere to their belief with more or less tenacity, according to the degree in which they had confirmed it. And it might require much instruction, and much positive evidence of its falsity, before they would give it up. We all know by our own experience how slow we are to reject opinions which have become thoroughly established in our minds. It is like taking away our very life to part with them.

The instruction given would evidently be in those principles which constitute the kingdom of heaven. They would be taught the existence of one God. How large a part of the human race do not know that simple and fundamental truth! They would be taught the true nature of His essential attributes. How little is known, even among professing Christians, concerning them! How diverse, and even opposite, are the conceptions of good men who have the Bible, and who are really desirous of living according to His commandments! Some regard Jesus Christ as God; others believe Him to be a mere man. Some regard Him as one person in a trinity of Beings whom they call God; and while they say one God with their *lips*, they have three distinct persons in their minds. *If there is this difference among Christians, how great*

must be the diversity of opinion among others ; there is the same diversity of belief concerning His character. He is all mercy to one, and all anger to another. To one he is a tender and loving Father ; to another a stern and inflexible judge. He cannot be all that men conceive Him to be, and they cannot come into harmonious relations to Him until they have a true knowledge of His character.

They would be taught what is really good and true in life. Many persons are honestly in doubt upon a multitude of subjects which relate to practical life. But they cannot take these doubts to heaven. That is no place for trial—for the rectification of opinions. The grand themes of instruction, therefore, would be the real nature of man as a spiritual being, and of the Lord as a Divine being, and the relations which exist between all beings. We learn something upon these subjects here, but how little ! How imperfect that little ! How much it is blended with fallacies and positive errors ! How various and contradictory are the opinions honestly entertained concerning the nature of heaven and heavenly joys ! It is a very common doctrine that the happiness of heaven will consist mainly in perpetual adoration and praise. If the doctrine is not true, how disappointed those will be who have firmly believed it. If it is true, how many more will fail to find their true idea of happiness. Truth is infinite ; there is no danger that there will be any lack of subjects upon which most persons will need instruction. Especially since in this world we see as through a glass darkly, and our clearest knowledge concerning spiritual and Divine things is *mingled with so many fallacies and appearances.*

There is every reason to believe, therefore, that we shall become learners for ever. But there will be many circumstances which will greatly facilitate our acquisition of a knowledge of spiritual truth.

1. We shall be freed from the encumbrance and limitations of the material body. Our senses and all our mental faculties will be much more acute. Being in a world where all things are spiritual, there will not be that contrariety and antagonism which we find between our thoughts and affections, and dead inert matter. We shall not be continually deceived by the illusions of appearances, and bound by the strong bonds of hereditary opinions. All the faculties being in clearer light, we can see through and clearly understand many subjects at a glance, which we could not comprehend by years of study in this life. We all know something of the influence the body has upon the mind. When it is weary, enfeebled by disease, and filled with pain, we find it difficult and often impossible to think upon any subject in a connected and rational manner. In old age, men sometimes seem to lose all their knowledge and mental power. How great the change from the elastic and vigorous action of the mind when the body was in its prime, and acted in perfect harmony with it. But the difference is not so great as it will be between the highest attainments of the mind, when clothed with the material body, and when entirely emancipated from it. All comparisons between the most extreme states of the soul when in the body must fall far short of the reality. It will be vigorous, elastic, keen, *comprehensive*, untiring, perceptive ; so great will be the

change, that men will seem to awake as from a dream; to have passed from darkness into light.

2. Angels will be our teachers. We all know how much a wise teacher can help us. And by a wise teacher, I mean one who not only understands the subject he teaches, but the mind he instructs. In the spiritual world men do not wear masks. The whole outward form is the embodiment of the inward life. The angels can understand at a glance the specific spiritual state of those committed to their care. They can put themselves in their state, as it were, and see truths from their standpoint. They know, therefore, exactly what they need. And they know equally well how to supply it. They know in what order, and by what processes, to lead the mind from step to step, out of any error, to the recognition of any truth. What an amazing help this must be! While here in the material body, using the clumsy methods of an artificial language, we often fail to make our exact difficulties known. The wisest teachers must often give their instructions at random, and even if they meet the case, we may not understand them; and so we grope our way along, the blind often attempting to lead the blind, and both falling into the ditch. But in the spiritual world, minds will come into perfect *rapport* with each other; and each will give and receive to the extent of its power. Such being the state of those who learn, and the wisdom of those who teach, they could hardly fail to make the most rapid progress.

But the methods of our spiritual teachers will be as *wise as their knowledge* is perfect. By the operation

of spiritual affinities, to whose action there are no obstacles in the spiritual world, those who were in similar states of affection and thought would be drawn together, and a complete classification would be effected. Those whose spiritual wants are the same, and those who are the most competent to supply them, would be drawn into intimate relations. This would only be carrying out, under perfect conditions, principles which are universally operative in this life, and the accomplishment of results which we are always in the effort to attain. As society advances in civilization and intelligence, it becomes more distinctly classified and arranged. This process goes on in business, in education, in social and civil life, in everything. The results, however, are very imperfect, because we are compelled to judge by external and artificial means. Whereas, in the spiritual world, state alone will determine our place, and our associates, even to the most minute particular.

It would necessarily follow that those whose spiritual wants were the same, would be drawn into the same society. Thus infants, children, youth, and all of every age and state, would be arranged into societies or schools, where they could receive instruction exactly adapted to their wants. All of the same age, even in infancy, would not be together. But those of a similar hereditary character; those who needed similar processes of instruction, to repress every evil tendency, and to develop the true principles of a heavenly life, would be in the same schools.

It must be a most consoling thought to every parent who has children in the spiritual world, that they are not to remain in the ignorance and feeble-

ness of infancy ; that the Lord has made provision for their instruction and for the development of all their faculties into angelic perfection. They are free from all contagion of evil example, from the temptations of wicked companions, and the imperfect methods and the false principles of the schools of earth. They will never be taught anything that is untrue ; they will never have any lesson to unlearn. Their delicate natures will not be subject to the rude and blind treatment that children receive in this life. The angels will love them with a tenderness greater than a mother's ; they will know how to touch the secret springs of their innocent natures ; and all their faculties will develop in beautiful harmony and order, as the bud unfolds into the blossom, and develops into the fruit. No shadows will fall upon their hearts ; no tears will ever dim their eyes ; they will have no hard and repulsive tasks to perform ; they will never go astray. The innocence of infancy will never receive a stain ; and the elastic, bounding joys of childhood will never be repressed. They will grow up into the manly strength and feminine grace of adult age ; they will attain the wisdom, the culture, the comeliness, and the ineffable beauty and blessedness of the angels, by processes of order, harmony, and ever-increasing delight.

But not only are all shades of character nicely discriminated, and all specific wants perfectly met ; the methods of instruction are also as superior to those which are practised in the schools of this life, as that world is superior to this. This perfection does not consist in their being entirely different or opposite to *the methods of instruction in this life*. They could

not be, unless we are entirely different beings from what we are here. This shows the coherency and logical consistency of the doctrines of the New Church; for while they teach many things concerning the spiritual world and the nature of spiritual life, which many persons regard as the mere fancies of a diseased mind, they will be found, upon careful examination, to be logical and inevitable deductions from the nature of the human mind, and perfectly consistent with all we know of the Divine methods. What better evidence of their truth could a rational mind demand?

As illustrations and proof of this assertion, take what these doctrines teach us concerning the methods of instruction in the world of spirits. "Truth is taught principally by representatives." Instead of describing a subject by words only, it is represented to the life. This can be done in the spiritual world, because thoughts assume form and become visible there.

Suppose, for example, a number of novitiate spirits had an imperfect or false idea of what really constitutes the neighbour, or of who is our neighbour, as all children and most adult persons have. Instead of a parable of words, the actual scene could be presented. To teach this truth, our Lord has given us the Parable of the Good Samaritan. If the persons He desired to teach were in the spiritual world, the scene described by words in the parable could be made to appear in reality before the eyes of the persons who needed the instruction, with innumerable particulars, and in such fulness, that a whole library could not contain a verbal description of them.

Or suppose the nature and delights of innocence

was the subject upon which instruction was to be given. The angels could cause a perfect panorama of all living objects which were the perfect embodiments and representatives of innocence, not merely to pass before those who were to be instructed, but to surround them on every side as far as the eye could reach. And this whole scene could be filled with everything which the purified intelligence and exalted perceptions of an angel could conceive. Flowers of the most pure and lovely colours ; lambs and doves, and the young of every living thing which represents this affection ; and little children, of surpassing loveliness and beauty, would gambol and sport with each other in many various forms, so that the very nature of innocence would be acted out to the life. And not only the abstract nature of innocence could be made to appear in various forms, but the origin of this affection as from its germ, the various methods of its development, and its various results, could all be represented by changes in the scene. There would be nothing wanting to make the beautiful panorama of this soul of virtue, and essential quality of heavenly character, perfectly adequate to the states of every one who beheld it.

Those who beheld this representation would also perceive the meaning of every particular form, of every motion, and every change, and its perception would be accompanied with inmost delight.

No one can deny that this would be a most effectual method of instruction, and a little reflection will show that it is in perfect accordance with the wisest and best methods in this life. The novelist and poet seek to *accomplish this end in words*, the artist with his

colours and canvas, and the forms into which he moulds the marble. The teacher of science finds the greatest help in diagrams and pictorial representations of the truths he seeks to communicate. The most of you have doubtless seen the pictures or the engravings of Cole's Voyage of Life, and know how vividly he has portrayed the wilfulness and confidence of youth, the illusions of ambition, and the certainty that the angels we desert in the morning of life, are our only hope in death. How much more vivid and powerful the impression such a picture makes upon our minds, than the most forcible statement in words of the abstract truth. But if we could see the whole history, only a few suggestive images of which can be represented upon the canvas, acted out to the life before us in all the details; if we could see the bright hopes fade, the terrible struggle, the inevitable defeat and final despair, the effect would surpass the picture far more than that does the verbal statement of the truth.

The reason is evident. When we are taught by the instrumentality of words, we are compelled to make the picture for ourselves. And there are but few persons who have much skill in that. In all cases the *idea* or picture before the mind's eye, will depend upon the meaning attached to the words. The picture upon canvas is made for us, and we have only to open our eyes to it. Still the objects are comparatively few, and we may not understand them. But when they move and act before us in various relations, we can hardly fail to gain their true meaning.

This method is, therefore, perfectly adapted to all the human faculties, and one which we all seek to adopt when we can. It is the Divine method, as we

know from experience. The Lord taught by parables, which are pictures of imaginary events painted in words. The whole Bible is such a panorama. In it, for thousands of years, the Jewish race is made to pass before us in all its phases of victory and defeat, of servitude and dominion, of glory and shame, from its rise to its dispersion. In this history every man can see his own life as in a glass. He can see his relations to the Lord, and to his fellow-man; the blessings which follow obedience to the Divine commandments, and the inevitable and terrible consequences which must flow from their violation. What further proof do we need that the same method will be continued in the new and more favourable conditions of the spiritual world, for the perfect use of those who dwell there?

By another method, men are convinced of the falsity of many of the doctrines they may have imbibed. They are permitted to try them until they are convinced of their falsity by actual experiment. This is often the only way that we can be made to see and acknowledge our errors in this life. One person will not take the experience and wisdom of another for his own use. Suppose, for example, that one carries with him the idea that the happiness of heaven consists in perpetual worship, as multitudes do; it would be more difficult to convince them by the force of argument of the falsity of this idea in the spiritual world than it is here. A simpler and more effectual method is adopted. They are permitted to test the truth of their doctrine by actual experiment. They are admitted into temples or are gathered by the attractions of a similar thought and affection into great multitudes around a throne, *and there they worship* until they become so weary and

exhausted by the forced and long-continued exaltation of their minds, that they are perfectly convinced of their mistake, and are ready to be instructed in the true idea of heavenly happiness, which, our Lord has taught us, consists in doing good to others from love to them and the Lord. Those who use the talents given them are the only ones who enter into the joy of the Lord.

In these and in many other ways, impossible in a material world, all who will receive instruction are prepared for heaven. Infants, children, and the ignorant, are taught heavenly truths, and are led to practise them until they have made them their own, until their whole characters are established in heavenly principles. Those who are good at heart, but who have imbibed false doctrines from education or other means, are permitted to see their errors, and when they see them they gladly reject them. Thus everything that is false is eliminated from their minds, the whole nature becomes homogeneous with itself and with the angels.

The progress they make is inconceivably more rapid than it could be in this world, owing to the increased power and freedom of the mind, and the facilities for shewing every truth and falsity in its true light and form. Some pass rapidly along, and in a few days are ready for heaven. Others linger and yield up with more or less reluctance the false principles they had imbibed in the world, according to the degree in which they had confirmed them. But, sooner or later, all who have not destroyed their spiritual life and *become dead in trespasses and sins*; all who are really *good at heart*, though they may not have been entirely

free from natural evils and falsities, are prepared for their eternal home.

When the preparation is complete, when everything is removed from their characters which is repellent to the purity and perfect order and harmony of heaven, they are drawn to it by the force of those spiritual affinities which separate them from the wicked, and which now, operating more powerfully and specifically, draw them to those of a homogeneous nature, and to their eternal home.

This is effected without any violation of their freedom, without any external and arbitrary power, without any force. Each goes, as of himself, though constantly directed by the infinite wisdom and mercy of the Lord. In effecting this end, the same laws operate that we see in full and universal force around us in this world. Every one preserves his identity and his consciousness of individuality. There is no link broken in the chain of his being. Through all the vicissitudes of life, from the cradle to the grave, from the grave to the open portals of heaven, we have been led in perfect freedom by a way we knew not. We have been protected from innumerable unseen dangers; we have been turned aside from paths which seemed to us flowery, and leading only to good, to steep and rugged ways, because the Divine mercy saw that the strait and narrow path was the one that led to heaven; we have cast off the material body, when Infinite Wisdom saw it was the best time for us to do it; we have been raised up into the world of spirits by the ministry of angels; we have been instructed and led by them to renounce every principle *in our characters that was not in harmony with heaven.*

And when this work was fully accomplished, they have led us in opening paths of growing beauty and ever-increasing peace and blessedness to our home, to the home of the heart and the understanding, the home of friends, of those who love us, and by whom we are loved the best of all in the universe, the home of every faculty and every joy.

Now the six days of labour are ended. For us there are to be no more blasted hopes, no corroding cares, no weariness from heavy burdens, no vain regrets, no rending anxieties, no blind gropings for the way, no illusions of the senses, no shadows on the soul, no repulsive labour, no repugnant associations, no pain, no sorrow, no eyes wet with tears, no partings from loved ones, no jar, no discord in the universal harmony. There will be no more death. The former things are passed away. All imperfection lies behind us.

What lies before us? "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." The highest angels cannot tell. But one thing we may know. With intellects elevated into a light so clear and brilliant that the brightest noon on earth is darkness compared with it; with their power so great, and their compass so extended, that all earthly knowledge is weakness and ignorance; with affections glowing with the intense ardours of the Divine love, and yet perfectly married to truth in the understanding, so that every desire finds full expression; in a world where all without is in perfect harmony with all within; where all the faculties are increased in power beyond conception; in these exalted conditions I know the promise will be fulfilled, "Ye shall ask me what ye will, and it

shall be done unto you." I know that when we have passed beyond the present capacity of the highest angel, in our varied power to ask and to receive, we shall only be gathering the crumbs which fall from our Father's table. Our ability to ask, and our power to receive, are yet only the infant's knowledge and the infant's power. We have but just begun to live; we are just opening our eyes upon the riches of our Father's bounty. Eternity—eternity is yet before us; and infinite beauty, peace, and blessedness await our desire to ask and our power to receive.

LECTURE VIII.

THE STATE OF MAN IN HELL.

IN former lectures we have endeavoured to follow man from his resurrection into the spiritual world, through his intermediate state, the World of Spirits, and to present the fundamental principles which determine his course, and the methods by which he is conducted to his final home. We have seen that his freedom is never violated ; that he is led by infinite mercy and wisdom ; and that the Lord always does all that He can for him, whether he be evil or whether he be good. As we advance to the consideration of his state in his eternal home, we shall find the same laws operating, and the same love and wisdom caring for him, whether that home be hell or heaven.

It seems to be a rational, and even a necessary conclusion, that the Lord's method of providing for the punishment of violated law should partake of His infinite mercy and wisdom, and should surpass all human methods, as His wisdom and power surpass ours. But men have always found it difficult to believe that the Lord administers His government in a different manner and by infinitely wiser methods than *man*. Consequently, they have attributed to Him

all the vindictive motives, and the external and arbitrary methods of human governments. The idea has generally prevailed that the Lord can forgive or remit the penalty of sin, as a civil magistrate remits the punishment for a crime committed against civil laws. It has been inferred, therefore, that the pardon of sin depends upon the arbitrary will, or good pleasure of the Lord. Those who look more to the stern justice of the Lord, and by justice understand the punishment of the sinner according to his deserts, hold that the Lord cannot remit the penalty of sin consistently with His own character and the safety of His government, without some compensation or satisfaction for His violated law. Others, on the contrary, who look more to the Lord's love and mercy, believe that He will save all men from mere mercy, if not immediately, then at some future time, when their sins have been sufficiently punished. Each party goes to the Bible and seizes upon those passages which appear to confirm its views, and brings all its ingenuity and force to explain away the meaning of those which appear to oppose them.

But the question can never be settled in this way. It cannot be rationally and conclusively answered without some certain knowledge of the nature of man, and of his relations to the Lord. Human governments are not the true types and examples of the Lord's government. We must learn of the Lord Himself. If we can discover how He rewards good, and how evil is punished in one province of His government, we may safely conclude that we have found the principles and methods according to which He *administers* His government in every depart-

ment of His kingdom. We shall have no difficulty in this; for there is one province in His government with which we are all more or less familiar from experience and observation. We all know something of the nature and methods by which we are rewarded for obedience to the laws of physical life, and punished for disobedience to them. And here we may find a key that will unlock all the secrets of the Divine Government in every kingdom of life.

The Lord has so formed man that he is capable of receiving delight from everything around him. His whole form is a combination of organs or senses through which the material world comes to him and brings him delight. But in order to accomplish this end, the nicest order and adjustment of man's physical organism to the world without and to the world within him, is necessary, and must be constantly maintained. Any derangements of that order must necessarily defeat the end for which it was instituted. So long as the true order and exact relations are maintained, we are rewarded for every activity with delight. Everything we hear, or see, or smell, or taste, or touch, gives us pleasure. Every one who is in perfect physical health is physically happy. He has no sense of pain, and can have none. So long as he obeys the laws of physical life, there is no way in which pain can possibly reach him. All his delights are the rewards he receives for his works—for his obedience to the laws of his life. The reward flows from the obedience. It is not so much *for* doing right, as *in* doing right.

But if he violates this order, and disobeys these *laws of his life*, he suffers for it. He is punished. If

he eats or drinks too much or too little, or of unwholesome substances; if he exercises any organ too much or too little, he violates a law of his life, and the penalty grows out of or flows from the violation of the law, in the same manner that the reward is the effect of his obedience. The pleasure and the pain are inseparably linked with the action. There is nothing arbitrary or uncertain in either case. The results in both arise from the same principle, and in their origin, intention, and effect, are both good. Man is drawn to orderly action by the pleasure, and deterred from evil by the punishment; and both the reward and the punishment are administered according to the work, whether it be good or bad. The pain, which is the punishment for violating a physical law, does not come from without any more than the pleasure. It is not annexed to it, but flows from it; it is inherent in it. And the punishment consists in pain, in feebleness; in being deprived of all the delights of health.

Now man, viewed as a spiritual being, is as really a man, an organized human form, as he is as a material being; and all his enjoyments and sufferings flow from the orderly or disorderly action of these forms, in the same way, relatively, that his bodily sufferings and delights flow from the abuse or orderly use of his physical organism. This spiritual organism, as we have shewn in former lectures, is as variously and nicely related to all spiritual objects and forces as his material body is to this world; and its modes or order of action are laws of spiritual life. When these spiritual laws are obeyed, or we act in conformity to the *order and constitution* given to man by the Lord,

happiness, and happiness only, flows from the obedience. When they are violated, pain follows, and the duration and degree of the pain are exactly according to the extent and degree of the violation of the spiritual law. The pleasure and pain are not affixed arbitrarily; they both flow from the action of the same law, under different circumstances, and one is as inevitable as the other.

But we are not left to mere assumption or analogy on this subject. We know from experience that it is so, even in this world. Every one knows that he is always happy when he feels kindly and thinks truly, and endeavours to act right towards all others. The love of others as surely brings happiness with it as heat brings warmth. In the same manner hatred, or the indulgence of any evil passion, just as inevitably brings pain. No one can do a wrong action and escape the punishment. He may, indeed, escape the punishment which man has annexed to it; but he cannot escape the penalty of the spiritual law. A man may commit murder and never be detected. But can he avoid the consciousness of his crime? He may wash the stains of blood from his hands, but can he wash it from his soul? Can he forget? Whither can he flee from himself? What darkness can hide him? What hand shield him from the fiery stings and biting strokes of guilt? The real penalty, as you see, cannot be avoided. The laws of natural and spiritual life are the same in principle, and the rewards and punishments are administered in the same way. The penalty is inherent in, and flows from the act. And it cannot in any way be separated from it.

But this is not only true of that which is felt as

punishment immediately, but of all the consequences which flow from it. Everything we do, whether evil or good, reacts upon us. Good causes a greater good, and evil results in some form of punishment. Kindness towards others begets kindness in others towards us. A thoroughly honest and good man soon finds himself surrounded with friends. The principle is seen in the great outward changes and facilities for business and pleasure that we possess at the present time. As soon as men began to turn their thoughts and affections to something useful—to mechanical inventions—what a change it soon wrought in all our relations to outward things? How soon they began to react upon us for our good in a thousand different ways!

In the same manner the evil passions and deeds of men have reacted upon them in some form of punishment. The thief and robber build their own prison, and shut themselves up in it. The outrages of evil men upon others render their confinement necessary to the general welfare, and thus the whole community stands arrayed against the evil. When a man of violent and vindictive passions gives vent to them in words and deeds of violence against other men, he soon calls down upon himself curses and blows, and even death. These are illustrations of the general principle that the life of every one reacts upon him either as reward or punishment, according to his deeds, so that it is strictly true that punishment flows from the evil, even when it seems to come from others.

But will it not be different when we come into the spiritual world? How can it be, if men are men, if their happiness flows from their activities, from the *exercise of their affections*? It is evident that it can-

not, for, so far as we know, there is but one way of being happy, and that is by the exercise of some affection. If a person has no good affections, how can he exercise them? He could as easily enjoy all the delights of seeing without eyes. If the indulgence of evil affections must, in the nature of things, cause pain, how can the evil escape suffering? Passing into the spiritual world does not change a man's nature; consequently the laws of life must be the same there that they are here. Man is a spirit now.

Suppose the Lord should say to every one when he comes into the spiritual world, "I withdraw all charges against you. I will not punish you for anything you have done. Enter heaven. Do as you please. Enjoy yourself as you best can." Do you suppose that would make the evil man good? He is the embodiment of selfish and worldly loves. Do you suppose he would now immediately reverse his whole nature and begin to love the Lord and his brother supremely? No—no more than thieves and murderers are changed to saints by receiving a free pardon for their crimes. Suppose the prison doors of all the penitentiaries in the land were opened to-morrow, and there was a general jail delivery throughout the Country, do you think the malefactors now confined in prison would feel grateful for the clemency of the government and return to virtue? No: they would rush into worse crimes as the fear of punishment was removed.

We may safely conclude, therefore, that punishment is good for the wicked, and that it must inevitably flow from evil, and that the Lord's government is everywhere the same in principle. The origin of *punishment*, then, is in the evil. Nor does it come

from any other source, however many channels it may pass through, and however various the forms it may assume before it reaches the doer of the evil. Consequently, the doctrines of the New Church accord with universal laws, in teaching that the Lord punishes no one. He is love and mercy itself, and no evil or pain can come from Him. No one thinks of attributing his physical sufferings to the Lord. When we expose ourselves to a greater degree of heat or cold than the nature of our material bodies can sustain, we are punished for it, more or less severely, according to the degree of our exposure—sometimes with the entire loss of limbs or life. But no one would think of saying that the Lord sent that suffering and mutilation because we had violated His laws. Our punishment had its origin in our disobedience—in the violation of a good law. So it is with every pain human beings suffer. No suffering does, or can come from the Lord. He is not the author of evil or of its punishment.

It follows, as a necessary consequence, from this fundamental principle, that no one is or can be punished for an evil after it has been removed. The Lord does not lay up charges and penalties against men. He does not give them license in this world, and punish them in the next for it. That is a most horrible doctrine, *Men are not punished in the spiritual world for what they do in this, but for what they do there.* It is true that the evil life and habits which men confirm here become their life there, and lead them to do evil and thus to be punished. But when they cease to do evil, they cease to suffer for it. Men often jump to conclusions from the truth that neither facts nor experience warrant. They say—"If I shall not be punished

in the spiritual world for what I do in this, when I get there I will stop sinning and thus I will escape all punishment." But why not stop now? If you should express the answer that is in your heart, you would say—Because I wish to indulge in selfish and worldly delights a while longer. Should we not have the same desire and the same delights there? We must not forget that we shall be ourselves, and not beings of another nature, when we rise in the spiritual world. It does not change our characters to throw off the material body, but rather makes us more completely ourselves. We shall even find it more difficult to change then than we do now, for the understanding and will will be one there, and we can only think of what we love. We cannot be outwardly good and inwardly evil. There are two consequences which follow every evil: one is the immediate pain it causes, and the other the habit of evil which it confirms. The truth, then, that no one is punished in the spiritual world for what he does in this, gives no license to sin, but makes its consequences more severe and terrible.

But I proceed, in the second place, to state how the wicked are punished in the spiritual world. In a former lecture I showed that those who are inherently wicked remain in the world of spirits until they have put off all that is not homogeneous to their ruling love, so that every evil affection has its corresponding falsity, and the spirit finds nothing in himself that opposes or in any way prevents him from acting out his essential nature. He throws off all appearances of good; for in the spiritual world those who are in good have a *perception* of everything that is opposite to their love, *so that no disguises or subterfuges avail any one.*


Every one is known for what he is, and is drawn by an irresistible attraction to those of similar affection. "His external form corresponds to his internal, and is its exact type and effigy; consequently, it is then known, as soon as seen, what sort of a spirit he is, not only by his countenance but by his person, and also by his speech and by his gestures; and as, likewise, he is now in his intrinsic identity, he cannot abide anywhere but where those like himself dwell. For in the spiritual world there is a complete communication of affections and of the thoughts thence originating, on which account a spirit is conducted as if of himself, because from his own affection and its delights, to those who are like him."

Being thus openly introduced into the society of those of a similar character, it is not difficult to determine what would be the inevitable result. We must keep in mind that the same principles operate in the spiritual world that operate here, only they are more clearly and freely developed. The life of spirits is as real, and the ends they seek to obtain are as real, and seem to them much more desirable, than the ends men seek in this world. And they pursue them through various instrumentalities; they use each other to accomplish their purposes, and to do that they must present motives; they must offer some good, or create some fear.

Under these circumstances, imagine a company of human beings, in which each one was fired with the lust of dominion, claimed homage for himself, and desired to make every one serve him. You see at once that there could be no bond of union among them but fear. The interests of each one are hostile to all the others. There would be jealousies, envyings,

hatreds, fears ; the exercise of tyrannical powers, the most cruel punishments, and the most abject servitude. No one could act out his nature freely without coming in contact with all the others, and calling down their vengeance upon him. Each one would be kept in torment, either from the fear of injury, or from the desire to act out his evil love, or from the inevitable punishment that would follow from acting according to it. It would be impossible for him to escape punishment in any other way than by submission, and quietly surrendering himself to be a slave.

There have been, and there are still, such hells in this world. History furnishes us with the most mournful and shocking accounts of the tyrannies and cruelties inflicted upon each other by those who had the power or desired to obtain it. How many millions of human beings have been slaughtered ; how many have been immured in dungeons, and subjected to the most terrible tortures ! All tyrannical governments could furnish us with abundant examples to illustrate this principle. All the societies of the hells are governed by some one who seeks the position from his indomitable love of rule, and by his power to subdue and command others. The ruler would obtain his position in the same manner that he would in a band of pirates and robbers. He who had the greatest cunning and strength, the most daring and energy, and the greatest skill and power in command, would seize the chief power and rule. But every such government must be a tyranny, and the only motive to obedience fear. The lust for dominion in each one would lead to perpetual plotting and counterplotting, to commotions, insurrections, and consequent punishments.



Suppose, again, a society in which every one's ruling love was cruelty, or the delight of inflicting pain upon others (and such dispositions are not unknown in this world), the consequence must inevitably be the misery of every one. For no one could act out his nature without inflicting pain upon some one else, and this would bring down vengeance upon his own head. The happiness of every member of such a community would consist in disturbing, annoying, fretting, exciting fears, opposing the delights of others, and by a cunning, deceit, and craftiness, known only to spirits, inflicting pain. Would not such a condition of things keep every one in torment?

In the same manner we may take any other evil, and carry it out to its legitimate consequences. Collect together a number of persons who are the embodiments of it, and every one who knows anything of the nature of evil must know that nothing but punishment, or suffering in some form, could flow from such a society. We see that it is so here; it must be so in the nature of things. We see also that the punishment does not come from the good, but from the evil. They delight to inflict it upon each other, and if they were not restrained by fear, they would, if it were possible, destroy each other. Their ruling loves all impel them to act in opposition to others. As they love nothing but themselves, they can act from no other motives, and as their understanding and will have become one, they can think nothing but what they love; the only restraint that can have any weight with them is fear. Their fears also can only be excited by their sufferings. *The state of the wicked is such, then, that they never can*

act from affection, without rousing up opposition, and bringing back upon themselves some form of suffering. If they refrain from evil, they must do so from compulsion or fear. All that keeps them within bounds is restraint of some kind. They are all, literally, the vilest slaves. And the punishment of each one is exactly adapted to his state, and never passes beyond the severity necessary to keep him in his proper place, and to prevent him from injuring others. The kinds of punishment the wicked inflict upon each other are as numerous as the varieties of evils in which they are principled.

It is a law of the spiritual world that everything that surrounds its inhabitants is in exact correspondence with their state or character. The scenery of the hells, then, must be composed of all that is essentially repulsive and horrible. Its inhabitants dwell in darkness, or what is darkness compared with the light of heaven, because, like owls and bats, they cannot bear the light. They are themselves horribly deformed monsters, because every one is the form of his own evil, and they dwell in dens and holes, in filthy and dilapidated hovels, surrounded with stagnant marshes, in whose slime every hideous and deformed thing that represents their own evils is bred. Some dwell in deserts of sand, or wildernesses filled with savage beasts, and still more savage spirits. The evil of every one begets its corresponding phantasies, which people his world, and haunt and terrify him.

When we consider that the senses of spirits are much more acute than they were when clothed with *flesh in this world*; that their power is vastly increased, *and their cunning and malignant arts are so great that*

they cannot be described in human language, and that many of them are unknown even to the most malicious in this world ; that there are no restraints but fear, and no love for anything but evil, and no thought but how to accomplish it, we can well imagine that their condition is so miserable, that it may well fill our minds with horror to think of it. And yet, perhaps, we love the same evils, and if we were left in freedom to seek our like, we should, of our own accord, join some of these miserable societies, and become a slave like them.

It may be proper here to remark, that none of the punishments of the wicked consist in remorse, or in the stings of conscience. They have no conscience, and they are, therefore, incapable of remorse. Every man who has a conscience goes to heaven. The possession of a conscience shows that the Lord has some hold upon him. The wicked do not care for heaven. Their only desire is to indulge in their own lusts, and their only grief consists in the restraints that are imposed upon them, and the punishments which flow from their evils.

It is sometimes supposed that the wicked will mourn over their past folly, and repent, though their repentance will not avail them, because their day of probation is over. But their evils cause them no regret. They rather glory in their shame. They do not mourn over the past ; they only mourn that they cannot gratify their lusts in the present. One sincere and earnest desire to know the truth and to live it would fling the gates of hell wide open, and release its possessor from the eternal prison-house. *But no such desire is ever breathed in those gloomy and ten*

rible abodes ; for no one who is capable of such an affection ever goes there. No. The life of the hells, which is essential death, is a life of purely selfish and worldly lusts.

But is there no escape from hell? Will not its inhabitants finally see the folly of evil, and cease to do it? Will they not become instructed in the truth and be raised to heaven? Some believe that they will; but their belief is not founded upon revelation, or reason, or a true knowledge of the nature of man. There are many reasons why it is impossible, in the nature and constitution of things, that such a change should take place.

1. A spirit, who is essentially evil, cannot be taught what is true. He cannot think what is true, or have any desire to live a good life. The only ground for teaching any one the truth in this world is, because the will and the understanding are separated, and we can see and speak the truth even when we have no will to do it. If a man could think only about what he loved ; that is, if his thoughts flowed only from his affections, and were the form and expression of them as they are in the spirit world, he could not be reformed here. There would be no possibility of saving him.

2. Again, a spirit is an organized human form, entirely inverted by evil. A direct influx of the Divine life into such a form would rend it to pieces ; because its currents would flow in a direction entirely contrary to the currents of the evil life. An evil spirit could not breathe the air of heaven. If it were possible for him to attempt it, he would gasp like a fish out of *water*, or would be so tormented that the deepest hell *would be a comfortable place compared with it.*

3. There is a proper time in the order of the creation of every being and thing, when the different parts that compose it must be inserted, and commence their growth; and if they are not inserted in their proper time, they never can be. Suppose a child is born into this world without eyes; is there any possibility that it can ever see? We know there is none. The Lord cannot, from immediate mercy, or the exercise of arbitrary, omnipotent power, give eyes to the child or the man; for the only way in which he can do it has not been obeyed. He cannot go back. As the first steps in the organization of our material bodies were taken before we were born into the world, so the first steps in our spiritual organization must be taken before we are born into the spiritual world. And by spiritual organization I mean that interior plane of the spiritual mind which can receive the Divine Love and Wisdom in true order. In other words, "A man must be born again, or he cannot see the kingdom of God." But there is no chance for him to be born again in the spiritual world. He has passed that state in his existence when such a work could be begun. There is no basis for the new spiritual organism to rest upon. We might as well begin at the top of an arch to construct it, or plant our seeds in the air, or hope to obtain fruit before we have blossoms. A spirit is not part memory, part understanding, part reason, and part will; but he is all will. The only hold he has upon anything is his affection for it. Nor does he desire anything else, or think of anything else. I repeat, that plane in his nature, in which goodness and truth can be implanted, is wanting, and can never be supplied.

Some think this doctrine militates against the Divine Benevolence. If they can believe that all will be restored to happiness and heaven some time in the vast futurity, no matter how remote, they are content. It saves the Divine character, they think, and saves man. But they cannot endure the thought that any one will suffer eternally; eternity is too long, they say. But it is not; eternity is neither long nor short. It has no reference to time whatever; it is a state of the soul. Spirits do not think how long they have been in hell or heaven, and how long they will have to remain there. Eternity is *now*. They do not think or care for to-morrow or yesterday; they are absorbed in the present. They are seeking to gratify their lusts or to escape punishment, and they have no thought for anything else. The fact, therefore, that they will never be delivered from this state, does not militate against the Divine mercy. *Never* is a thought that is impossible to beings who are entirely removed from the laws of time and space. The existence of evil for thousands of years, or even for a moment, is just as strong an argument against the Divine benevolence as is its existence to eternity. Nor is it to be supposed that the wicked think their condition one of continual suffering. They have their infernal delights, and they can conceive of no other. They are not always undergoing punishment. Do you not suppose the thief and the robber are delighted when they succeed in a skilful theft or a bold robbery? Does not the man who loves money more than honesty feel a delight when he has defrauded his neighbours? Is not *revenge* sweet to the revengeful? Do not men voluntarily dwell in caves and dens, or in hovels, where


they are surrounded by all forms of foul and hateful things? Are there not hells in every city, where the darkest crimes are committed, where evil passions rage; hells in which men and women voluntarily immerse themselves? Why do not those miserable beings leave them if they take no delight in them? Why do we not find them engaging in some useful employment, frequenting churches and commencing the life of heaven? They are not held in these hells by any external force. Is it not because they take delight in the society and practices they find there, and find no pleasure in the society and employments of the pure and good? The same principle applies to the inhabitants of the hells. They have no desire to change. They cannot conceive of any other happiness than what they enjoy. They do not consider existence a curse to them. They do not pray for extinction? There is no one who does not, on the whole, regard his life as a blessing. I cannot conceive that the Lord ever created a human being who does not, or who would voluntarily resign it. That all do not go to heaven, then, no more militates against the Divine goodness, than it does that all are not equally happy in this life or in heaven.

But every one does go—I will not say where he can be the happiest—but where he will be the least miserable. A wicked man has his delights, but only a good man can be happy, for happiness is not a proper term for the delights of the wicked. The hells are just as clear an evidence of the Lord's goodness as the heavens; as in this world the jail and the penitentiary are as clear an evidence of the benevolence of the state as asylums for the blind or orphans. It

is better, both for himself and for others, that a man who will not voluntarily refrain from inflicting injury upon others should be imprisoned. In the penitentiary he can be of some use to others, and he has not the same opportunity to injure his own nature. So it is with the hells. They are provided by the Lord's mercy and love as truly as the heavens are, and exist according to the same law. They are the best that can be done for those in that state. And what the Lord can do for any human being depends upon his state and capacity to be affected by the Divine Life.

Evil is considered by some as an imperfect state of goodness, and the idea is entertained that the worst men may develop into angels. But evil is not imperfect good, and falsity is not imperfect truth; and the one cannot be developed into the other. Could a falsehood become a truth by development? Can you cure a man by developing his disease? Can sour be changed to sweet, and cold to heat, by developing them? How many degrees of cold would it take to make one warm and comfortable? Good and evil, truth and falsity, are the opposites of each other, and the more you develop either, the more remote they become.

A man may be internally good, and have many external imperfections. Then there is ground for development. His essential goodness will finally cast off all his imperfections, and his whole nature will become homogeneous. His development does not consist in changing the evil into good, but in destroying *the evil* and substituting the good in its place. On *the other hand*, a man may be internally and essen-



tially evil, and externally good—he may know many truths and assume many virtues; then, according to the same law as that which operates in the good man, his progress will consist in casting off all that is apparently good in him, and in making his external conduct agree with his internal life. The only real progress that is possible for a bad man is to cease to do evil—to let his essential nature become quiescent. But this would be retrograding, according to his idea, because it would be restraining him from the ends he desires to attain. It would be withholding him from what he loves. And this process, without any doubt, does go on in the hells. Its inhabitants improve in one respect. Their ruling loves being constantly repressed and inevitably punished, they become, in a degree, quiescent. Their natures are not changed. They do not become good, but they cease to be so violently and actively evil. They do not become more happy, but less miserable. The change is not from a lower to a higher life, but rather to a less active state of evil. To remove all the evils of an essentially bad man would annihilate him, for it would take away all his life. Thus, while the wicked in the hells become less actively evil, they never become radically better. Their love is not changed. They do not turn towards the Lord, but ever look away from Him towards their own loves. Those who are essentially evil cannot pass out of the state they are essentially in when they leave this world, for there is nothing in them to develop into goodness. This truth is illustrated and confirmed by all true knowledge of man's nature, and all the analogies of the Divine order.

But the Lord never permits any suffering to come

upon us, either in this world or the other, that is not for our good. The end of punishment is not the satisfaction of Divine justice, but the permission of the Divine love. Its sole end is to keep men and spirits from plunging into deeper evils, and consequently from bringing upon themselves greater sufferings. This must be so, from the fact that all pain grows out of the violation of law, or of the order and constitution of our nature. It is, therefore, as impossible for men to do wrong, and not suffer spiritually, as it is for them to violate the laws of health and not suffer physical pain. The end of the punishment of the wicked, therefore, is to save them from greater suffering. It is one way in which the Lord protects the evil, and withholds them from greater evils. All punishment is reformatory. The Lord always gives all the good He can to ever one. If He cannot give a positive good, because man will not receive it, He will at least restrain him as far as possible from greater evils. And so far as an evil becomes quiescent, to that degree one is saved from the consequences of it.

The conclusions to which we must come, then, concerning the nature and punishment of the wicked in the spiritual world are these :

1. All punishment flows from evil, and is so inseparably connected with it, that one cannot exist without the other. No punishment comes from the Lord or the angels. Even when evil spirits inflict it upon each other, it still flows from their wickedness.

2. The punishments or sufferings which the wicked suffer, must, from the very nature of their condition and state, surpass all the powers of language to *describe*. They are more various than the pains of

body and mind which men suffer in this world. All are not punished alike, but in every case, as the suffering flows from the evil, it is exactly proportioned to it.

3. As the lusts of the infernals become quiescent, as they must do when they find that every attempt to act from them inevitably produces pain, their sufferings will become less. But it will be rather from the loss of life, than from any positive improvement in character. It will be more like the mitigation of suffering from the torpor of cold when one is freezing, than from any increase of goodness. But however great the changes of this evil nature may be, there is no possibility that the wicked can be elevated out of it, and pass into heaven, for they have nothing within them that is capable of receiving the life of heaven, and no grounds or basis for forming that life. That point in their creation, when the germs of a true spiritual organization could have been formed, has been passed, and they can never return to it.

4. The purpose of all punishment or pain in every form is to prevent evil, and consequently greater suffering. It is in no sense or form vindictive. No one is punished because he was once guilty of an evil which no longer exists in his nature. But punishment is permitted only, and just to that degree which is necessary to keep his evil desires within bounds, and thus prevent a greater evil.

In general, the hells are governed by fear, for there are no other motives which have weight with their inhabitants. They have no conscience, no sense of shame, no remorse, no love for anything good, no *desire for improvement*. They are the embodiment

and forms of their own evils. Their whole nature is homogeneous. There is no ground for any conflict within themselves, for there are no opposing principles in their minds. They love evil, and they believe nothing but the falsities that correspond to their evils. There is no ground for development, for there are no germs of goodness in them to develop. The best and only thing that can be done for them is restraint from without. This result is attained by a principle of universal order, according to the same law that rewards the good; according to laws that operate in this life in the same manner, and which are inherent in the very nature of man. The wicked are not wholly miserable. They have their satisfactions and delights as the wicked do in this world. The Lord does all He can for them. They could not be happy in heaven. They would writhe in perfect agony if they were admitted into its pure atmosphere. The Lord's mercy is as fully shown in the condition of the lowest devil as the highest angel. He gives all the good to every human being He has created, that he can be made to receive.

Thus man finds his home according to his state. His state, whether good or evil, determines it and forms it. The same law that makes the water the most suitable and delightful home for the fish, and the air for the bird, and determines the specific relations of every species of animal life to those substances which supply its food, which forms its instincts and habits, and leads it to its home, operates in the final disposition of every human being. There is no possibility of escape from it, without reversing all the laws of the Divine order. And that would be no escape

from it. Instead of relieving the Divine character from any apparent want of mercy and wisdom, and any human being from comparative misery, it would cause universal ruin, and either destroy the universe, or bring upon all created beings, the good as well as the evil, a thousand-fold more misery than is now suffered by the evil alone. There is, therefore, nothing in the doctrine that the wicked must suffer, and that they can never entirely escape from suffering, anything that is contrary to the eternal truth, that "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works."

LECTURE IX.

MAN IN HEAVEN.

HEAVEN, which all hope to attain, is a state of rest, of peace, and perfect happiness. But what is the nature of that happiness? What am I to enjoy there? What shall I find there that will fill my heart with peace and blessedness too great for words to express? These are questions which receive various and contradictory answers.

Multitudes, wearied with labour, look forward to heaven as a state of eternal repose. They will have no more duties to perform, no more burdens to bear; necessity will no longer goad them to reluctant tasks. They will have nothing to do but "to sit among the lazy saints," and bask in the sunshine of the Divine favour. Others add to this repose some degree of social intercourse. They will recline upon the banks of the heavenly Jordan, and recount to each other the various scenes of their past life, and they will hear from others—from the lips of Adam, and Moses, and David—an account of their personal history while in this world. The prevalent idea among Christians at the present day is, that heavenly happiness will consist in for ever singing the praise of the Lord. *The multitudes of the saved will surround His throne, bowing before Him, and casting their golden crowns*

at His feet, they will for ever sing the song of Redeeming Love, and make the whole heavens resound with anthems to His praise and glory.

In all these opinions, and in many others, the fundamental idea is cessation from all useful and active employment. Heaven is to be an eternal holiday—a state of security from every danger, and of rest from all work. This, as you will see upon a little reflection, is a merely negative conception of it. It is making heaven to consist in what it is not, rather than in what it is. There will *not* be any labour, or care, or anxiety, or bereavement. There will not be any tears or sorrow. There will be no more pain. But this can be said of the stones in the street, and the lilies in the field, and of the material body, as it lies mouldering to dust in the grave. But this is not happiness. It may be escape from the punishment due to sin—a release from those fears which torment so many in this world—with a sense of security for the future; but still it does not constitute a single element of happiness.

And if we take all that is positive in popular belief, we shall find but a few simple elements of happiness, which could not long content an intelligent being, unless his nature was much changed from what it is in this life, and shorn of many of its noblest qualities. The poor monk spoke the truth when he said—

“If one goes to heaven without his heart,
God knows he leaves behind his better part.”

“To sit down clad in white robes and wear a golden crown, for ever and for ever,” would be very poor and wearisome happiness, even if the repose

was varied by conversation and song. No; if the common belief is true, heaven is not so perfect a life as this. Instead of advancing towards the perfection of the Divine Character, man sinks down towards the condition of the brute and the clod, when he enters the spiritual world. Man's capacities for happiness are not so great as they are in this world, nor are the means of supply so various, full, and abundant. His noblest faculties of reason and affection must lose their power, their very nature, before he could endure the torpor of eternal repose. He is now an instrument of myriad strings, and the common belief would destroy all conception of him as a real substantial being, and of the spiritual world as anything but an empty name, and leave him only one string to thrum upon in dull monotony through eternity. The conversation of such beings must become, in time, as trite as nursery rhymes. They would long to return to earth and undergo its labours and suffer its pains, or even think

"The world of pain were better, if therein
One's heart might still be human, and desires
Of natural pity drop upon its fires
Some cooling tears,"

than to be a useless drone in the universe.

There is but little said directly in the Bible about the special means of our happiness in heaven. But every page of the Word declares the essential nature of a heavenly life. It is written so plainly and declared in so many forms, that it would seem impossible for any one who desired to know, to come to any other than one conclusion, and that is, that heaven must *consist in a life of active use*. If we examine our

natures with any degree of care and wisdom, we cannot fail to see that all our happiness flows and must flow from the normal, healthy activity of our faculties, and the more full, varied, and harmonious the activity is, the greater our happiness. Reason and experience teach us this. Repose and rest are pleasant ; but it is action that makes them so. Sleep is sweet and refreshing ; but it is wakefulness and labour that make it so. Eternal sleep is eternal death. It is delightful to throw off all the burdens of labour, to put the yoke of duty from the neck, and give the mind up to sport and play, free from all care. But if there was no sense of responsibility, and no special work to do, there would be no relief in our amusements, no recreation in our release from duty. The Lord has given us no useless faculties of head or heart. He intended them all for use. He formed them all to be the means of communicating to us some delight. And that delight can only be attained by their use. As the pipe and string make music only when they vibrate, so man's faculties, from the highest to the lowest, give him delight only when they are exercised. It is wise use that gives the largest measure of happiness, and this use is the only condition of happiness on earth or in heaven.

The Bible everywhere inculcates this life of active use. We are commanded to love others ; to do them good ; to let our light shine ; to improve the talents the Lord has given us ; to work in His vineyard ; and everywhere He promises to reward us according to our deeds. Many suppose we are to do our work in this life and to receive our reward in another. *This is true in one sense.* But the reward is not for work.

as men pay wages ; but in the work itself. "In keeping the commandments there is great reward." The only way in which we shall be rewarded in the spiritual world for work done in this, is in the strength and culture we get by it, and the consequent increase of capacity to do and to receive. In endeavouring to ascertain the nature of heavenly happiness, then, let us keep this eternal law of the Divine order and of man's spiritual nature continually in view, as our guide and rule of reason.

Heaven is a state of greater happiness than this world, because we shall find there more abundant, various, and perfect means for the exercise of every faculty of the will and the understanding.

All happiness flows from love. There is no exception to this law. The wicked find their delight in the indulgence and gratification of their evil lusts. It is the gratification of the affection, whether good or evil, which constitutes the delight. But the delights which flow from evil are soon turned to pain, because they are contrary to the Divine order ; while those that originate in the exercise of good affections, enlarge our capacities for happiness. The love of self and the world receives its poor and momentary reward ; but it contracts the heart, and closes it against the inflowing love of the Lord, and arrays those who exercise it against Him, and against every human being, while the love of the Lord and the neighbour opens the heart to Divine influences, and conjoins man to man, to angels, and the Lord.

The happiness of heaven consists pre-eminently in *the fact* that all pure and noble affections will have *the widest scope and the most abundant means for*

their development, and I know of no other way in which that happiness can be described, than by stating the facilities we shall find there for the exercise of our affections, and some of the most general forms which they will assume.

1. In heaven we shall be in perfect freedom. All freedom springs from love. We feel free when we can carry into effect the ends of life, or do what we please. In this world we are restricted by the nature of material substances, by our necessities, by opposition from others, and innumerable other things, from carrying out our affections into complete effect. But in heaven all these obstacles will be removed. Space will not separate us from those we love. They will all be with us. Necessity will not compel us to forego any delight. We shall have abundant means to gratify every taste and every desire. We shall meet with no opposition from others. On the contrary, every one will do all in his power to assist us in the attainment of our ends. We shall find helping hands and encouraging hearts on every side. We shall find those who can tell us all we desire to know, and assist us in all we desire to do.

Reflect a moment upon this one element of heavenly happiness. You can form some estimate of it from your experience in this life. Suppose you have an ardent desire to accomplish some great good for yourself or for humanity in this world. The moment you propose it you find every one desirous of helping you. You find sympathy, encouragement, and helping hands in every movement, and you are borne up and carried along on the flood-tide of good-will to the full *accomplishment of your end*. What consciousness of power

it would give you ! What certainty of success ! What security, satisfaction, and peace ! You will find this happiness to perfection in heaven. Every heart, and brain, and hand, will be yours. Yes, and vastly more than that—all the Divine forces will favour you—Omnipotence will be yours.

2. There will be no conflict between the various faculties and degrees of your own mind. Every nature will be homogeneous throughout in all its planes and degrees. You will not have to practise any self-denial. You will have no right eye to pluck out, no offending hand or foot to cut off, no life to lay down. You will love the Lord and the neighbour supremely, and therefore you cannot have any personal ends to gratify in preference to their good. There is no ground for self-denial, for your selfhood consists in loving others; and the only room for self-denial would be in preventing yourself from doing all in your power to promote the happiness of others—in making your life an idle and useless one.

This harmony of nature will be especially manifest in the perfect unity of the will and the understanding. In this life they are distinct. We love and desire what we do not know how to attain, and we have a knowledge of truth which we do not love to obey and do. Hence there is a perpetual conflict between the will and the understanding, and a sense of incompleteness and a want of satisfaction in all we do.

But it will not be so in heaven. We shall know how to do all that we love to do, and we shall love to do all that we know how, and we shall do it. There will be no overplus of knowledge or of will. Thus every deed will be complete. It will be to us the per-

fect ultimation and embodiment of our affection and thought, and consequently will perfectly content us. What a profound satisfaction there must be in this ! What fulness and completeness it must give to the activities of every day ! Our work will content us—our affection is perfectly satisfied ! We see no way in which it could have been done better. There is nothing lacking and nothing over.

3. Our work will not only content us, but it will content others also. There will be no envy or jealousy. Each one will hold the same relation to others in the same society, that the various organs of the mind or the body hold to each other. Each one will have his special function—some use which he can perform better than any one else. As the hand can do some things better than the eye, and the eye some things better than the ear, and so on with every organ in the body, so each member of a society can perform his own use better than any one else in the whole heavens. He will delight to do it, and all will delight to acknowledge his special use.

What harmony and loving regard this would produce in the society and in the whole heavens ! Imagine such a society in this world. Every member is in his place, and delights to be in it. Each one can do something that will be useful to the whole society better than any one else, and he does it perfectly, and all delight to acknowledge his use. What unity and power such a society or government would possess, and what happiness they would find in working together for a common end ! Such will be the happiness of every society in heaven. Each one will be content with *his function*, because it will content all others.

and all others will be content with it, because he who performed it was filled with delight in doing the good, and because no one else could do it so well. Thus, while each person is a complete human being in himself, he is a complement to every other member of a heavenly society, and they are all rounded into a symmetrical and perfect whole. Each one serves the whole, and all serve each one.

Can you conceive of any state, so far as regards yourself personally, that could be more conducive to perfect peace and happiness than this? There is not a discord in your whole nature; there are no conflicting elements within or without you. All the faculties of will, of understanding, of reason, and even sense, act in perfect harmony with each other. There could be no hesitation whether to speak or act; there could be no doubt about how we ought to act, or what we should say. There would be no imperfection in our utterance. We could express ourselves fully to the nicest shade of meaning—there would be no danger of being misunderstood. The hand and foot, and the whole spiritual body, would perfectly obey the will. Every faculty and organ would move as one, and reach the desired attainment.

This would be rest worthy of the name. Not the rest of inaction and death; but the rest from every jar, and discord, and constraint. The rest of perfect freedom, of harmonious activities that invigorate rather than exhaust. This would be the peace of heart and mind, of reason and act, all reposing upon each other, and moving joyously in accord with all other movements without and within.

4. But not only will all the elements of our own

natures be in perfect harmony with each other, and with all who dwell in the heavens, and with the Lord, but every object without and around us will also be in perfect harmony with us. It is impossible for us to conceive how much this state of the outward world would enchanse our happiness. But it must be far greater than we have any words to express, or imagination to conceive. To see everywhere around us, and above us, within the whole scope of our vision, nothing to offend us, nothing to suggest the feeling or the thought that anything is wanting to the perfection of the scene. Not only to see beauty everywhere, in landscape and home, but just the kind of beauty that is the most delightful to us. Wherever the eye rests, to be able to say—That suits me ; that equals my ideal. And far more than this, not only to be content with it, but to see the significance of everything. How little we know of the meaning of the outward world ! The flower is lovely, the landscape beautiful, the mountain sublime, but we gather only a vague and imperfect meaning from them. They say but little to us. But in heaven it is not so. Everything in particular and in general will answer to our affections and thoughts ; will be our idea ; and we shall feel a personal interest in it. There will be the same harmony and unity of the whole outward world with the whole world within, that there is between the various faculties of our being. Imagine yourself to be in such a world, in such a state, where perfect harmony reigns ; even with your present capacities for happiness, your senses dimmed and muffled with the veil of clay. And could you ask for anything more ? What more *could you ask ?* It equals your highest conceptions,

and you could not ask for what you could not conceive. There would be no want of satisfaction ; no vague longing for some unattained and unattainable good. Your affections and thoughts would rest in peace and perfect contentment.

5. But if we should stop here, we should have a very poor and imperfect conception of heavenly happiness. I have as yet stated but little more than the means for the attainment of happiness. We shall not only be in this harmonious and perfect state as to the essential conditions of happiness, but all our capacities will be largely and variously increased in power. The senses will become inconceivably more delicate and acute. The sight will become amazingly sharpened. Two causes will heighten the brilliancy of all colours, and the splendour in which all objects will be seen—the vastly increased purity and power of spiritual light, and a corresponding increased sensitiveness and capacity in the eye. The light is so great that the light of our sun is mere darkness compared with it. The atmospheres glow and sparkle as if composed of rainbows and diamond dust. There are colours which cannot be formed from material light, and each colour is far more clear, distinct, and brilliant, than the brightest on earth. The sense of touch is so delicate and acute in the spiritual body, and so perfectly adapted to all outward things, that every contact will give the most exquisite delight. We shall be all alive with sensation.

The same perfection will exist in the sense of hearing. This sense is more allied to the affections than any other. And it is this fact that gives to music its power. We know that each affection expresses itself

by a peculiar tone of voice. Sorrow moans and wails; quiet and gentle affections flow forth in soft and winning harmony; joy is loud and jubilant. Some chords are so plaintive, that they move us to tears quicker than any words. Indeed, some states of affection can be expressed much more fully and clearly by music than by words. If this is so here, what must it be in heaven, where the senses are much more acute, and the whole nature is attuned to finer harmonies than we can conceive? There are no discords there; nor do the inhabitants of heaven learn music as we do; it is spontaneous. At certain times, the affections of the angels flow forth in song; and then the song becomes the perfect embodiment and expression of the affection. And such is the similarity of state, that thousands and tens of thousands join in it in perfect concord. The particular states which gave it birth are fully expressed in the various parts and movements of the song, and all combine like various chords in one grand harmony. All who hear it understand it, and are affected by it. Thus every heart in the whole society vibrates in unison, is delighted, exalted, and thrilled by it. What voices the angels must have! We hear some in this world that thrill us with delight; what then must they be in heaven? Every tone is clear, round, smooth, and sweet; every chord is perfect; every note has its meaning—a meaning that is fully understood. All voices blend in perfect harmony, and give full and varied expression to every particular in the affection sung! And then with what acute perception they listen to this musical expression of pure, innocent, and exalted affections! Such delights will constitute one of the elements of heavenly happiness.

So we might employ a whole discourse upon the various delights of each sense, simply carrying out the general principle in some details to their logical consequence. Eternity will not exhaust, but increase their variety and perfection. But it is enough for our present purpose to know that the senses are far more acute, act with far more precision, and are more exquisitely adjusted to all outward forms. And all forms, colours, sounds, and qualities of external objects, are correspondingly perfect, and clearly defined.

It is a very common idea, that all things in the spiritual world (if there are any things there) are vague and indistinct in outline, shadowy, unreal, and illusory. But this is directly the reverse of the truth. They are far more real and distinct to every sense. Every person becomes more individualised. The lines which mark the identity of the angels are far more nicely and accurately drawn than they can be in this world. And this clear distinction in form, in office, and quality of character, will constitute one of the perfections of the heavenly state. While all will act in harmony, each element in the society will become more distinct from every other.

6. Another element of heavenly happiness consists in the fact that all the inhabitants live in the present, and are totally absorbed in it. It is a very common opinion that one of the great sources of pleasure in heaven will consist in reviewing our former life in this world. But a little reflection will convince us that there could not be much pleasure in that. It does not give us much pleasure here to look back upon the past; why should it there? There would certainly be as *much* pain as pleasure in it. We shall be so absorbed

in the various activities and delights of the present, and the new and attractive forms of the Divine Wisdom, that we shall not think of the past or the future. There will be no regrets for the past, and we shall borrow no trouble about the future. The Lord will fill our hearts so full of absorbing activities and exquisite delights, that there will be no room for remembrance or expectation. We shall take no thought for the morrow ; but, like lilies and sparrows, grow and sing, and in all possible ways communicate our delights, and trust implicitly in the Lord. There will be no sting from the past, no shadow of doubt about the future. We shall be ever busy and active in giving to others ; and while we do it and in doing it, the Lord will give to us good measure, pressed down and running over, through others, and immediately from Himself, and so the eternal years will be an eternal succession of delights.

7. But although we live in the present we shall not remain stationary. The law of mental and spiritual development, which is clearly established in this life, will not be annulled in the spiritual world. On the contrary, it will be carried out under more favourable conditions. All the powers of the mind gain strength and expand by action. Our affections grow stronger and purer by exercise. So do the reason and the understanding. The more you put into the mind the more capacious it becomes. The more you know, the more rapidly you can learn, and the more you see there is to learn. The more you enlarge the range of your affections, the purer and stronger they become. The more you love others the more your *capacity to love* increases, and the increase is not by

a diminished, but by an accelerated ratio. A wise man can learn a thousand things easier than a child can learn one. When a man once looks beyond himself and begins to do good to others, it is much easier to do two good actions than one. When you have given a dollar to your neighbour from love to him, you can give two much easier than you did the first.

Now, carry this law on into the spiritual world, and what must be the consequences? Do you not see that the infant born to-day may—nay, must—pass beyond the present attainments of the highest angel? Do you not see that there are, and can be, no assignable limits beyond which the regenerate soul must not pass? That our capacities for knowing, and loving, and, consequently, for happiness, must for ever increase in a continually accelerating ratio? What shall we become, then, when millions of ages have rolled away? The cup of life's happiness, full to-day, and by filling it made larger for to-morrow; every affection giving birth to a purer, higher, and more glorious truth, and every new truth preparing the way for a sweeter, lovelier, more blessed affection, and so on, for ever rising, for ever perfecting, for ever nearer the Lord. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be!" No, it doth not. The highest angel cannot conceive it. Oh, the grandeur, the glory of the blessedness of human destiny! As a necessary consequence of this continual and rapid expansion and perfection of our natures, you can see that no one grows old in heaven. You can see that what Swedenborg says upon the subject must be true, for it is the legitimate result of principles which we all acknowledge and see in constant operation in this life.

"Such as are principled in mutual love," he says, "continually advance in heaven towards the morning of youth, and the more thousands of years, the more nearly they attain to a joyous and delightful spring, and so on to eternity, with fresh increments of blessedness, according to their advancement in mutual love, charity, and faith. Those of the female sex who depart this life, broken with the infirmities of age, after living in faith towards the Lord, in charity towards their neighbour, and in conjugal love with their husbands, advance with the succession of ages, more and more towards the bloom of youth, and acquire a beauty surpassing all description. For it is the nature of goodness and charity to form and establish their own image in such persons, causing the delight and loveliness of charity to be expressed in every feature of the face, so that such persons become forms of love itself. . . This form of exquisite beauty affects with charity the inmost life of him who beholds it, and by the beauty of that form the truths of faith are imaged forth, and thereby rendered perceptible. Those who have lived in faith grounded in charity towards the Lord, become such forms of beauty in another life. All the angels are such forms, with an infinite variety, and of these heaven is composed."

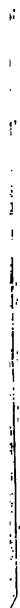
There is no old age, no infirmity, no signs of decay in heaven. Conceive every face you look upon to be a special and perfect form of some affection, so that it shall be distinctly, variously, and adequately portrayed in every feature, gleam forth in mild but radiant splendours from the eye, be enthroned in the forehead, moulded into beauty in the cheek, playing in smiles and lovely expression about the lips, flowing in har-

mony in the voice, rounding the whole form, and swaying it in graceful and gentle motions. And then conceive that you have the power of perceiving the meaning of every form and motion, and of being affected by it. It would send a thrill of joy through you, even to look upon such forms of purity and loveliness. What, then, must be the happiness of seeing such faces and forms everywhere, and of associating with them freely in all heavenly ministries?

8. I have said but little about the relations of the angels to the Lord, and I have no space to do it now, except to say that they are with Him where He is. They are one with Him, not immediately and visibly in His presence, as many suppose; they could not bear that; but they live in the sphere of His love, and in the light of His wisdom. They see Him in everything around them. They delight to acknowledge that all they possess is His continual gift to them, and the various tokens of His love. All the beauty of outward things, their habitations, their dress, their food, their beautiful ornaments, are His gifts, and they value them more as tokens of His love, than they do for their beauty. They are objects which suggest His love and thoughtful care. And they have a perception of their meaning. The thought is not, see what beautiful things I possess; but see the munificence, the love and wisdom of the Lord! My Father gave me these.

So in all their lovely ministries to each other, they remember that the brother angel is only the voluntary medium of the kindness. The Lord is the real giver. They ask no return for the favours they bestow. They rather thank the Lord that He has permitted them *to be the almoners of His bounty*; and so in all things

they regard Him first. And when they think of Him, and open their hearts to Him, a new wave of life from Him flows into them, expanding them, making their natures more delicate and sensitive to deeper and more exquisite delights. The attractions of His love get a more powerful hold upon them. They become more perfectly magnetized by it, and he draws them gently and lovingly closer to His infinite heart. They feel the new life thrilling through them, and they see it blossoming into all lovely forms around them. Thus He lives in them, and they in Him, and the Lord and the angels are continually becoming more and more perfect in one. It is the Divine of the Lord, the Divine love and the Divine Wisdom, which constitute heaven; and all are in heaven just in the degree they can receive that love and wisdom. You have friends there. Some who walked by your side in these streets, and met with you to worship. We see their faces here no longer. We have put their material bodies away tenderly into the earth, where they are returning to dust. But they are in heaven. Their faces are radiant with the Divine love. They have thrown off the infirmities of age, and they are advancing towards the spring-time of an eternal youth. There are our children. Beautiful, lovely innocents! They, too, are unfolding in those soft and glowing vernal airs, and becoming forms of the Divine love and wisdom. Our places will soon be vacant here. May they not be left eternally vacant there! May the Lord in His infinite mercy help us all to begin a heavenly life here, that we may continue it there, and become the partakers of its ineffable and ever enduring blessedness!



OUR CHILDREN IN THE
OTHER LIFE

CHAPTER I.

WHAT CHILDREN ARE AFTER DEATH—WHO TAKES CARE
OF THEM—THE HOMES PROVIDED FOR THEM.

A THIRD part of the human race, it is said, die in infancy and childhood. There are but few parents who must not feel a personal interest in the subject to which I invite your attention, for there are not many who have not been called upon to surrender one or more dear objects of their affections to the great Shepherd of souls. As the poet has beautifully sung :—

“ There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there ;
There is no fireside, howsoe’er defended,
But has one vacant chair.”

Viewed from this world, this mortality in our race in the first years of life is a great enigma. It is contrary to the Divine order; it is the defeat of the Divine purpose; it is the blasting of parental hopes; it is offering the cup of the richest blessings to the lips with one hand, and dashing it to the earth with the other. The Divine promise to parent and child is broken. How many a Rachel has mourned for her children and would not be comforted because they

were not! How many bereaved hearts have wondered why the Lord should bestow upon them such a priceless gift, only to take it from them; why He should open such deep and rich fountains of new life, only to change them to bitterness. These questionings of the sore and aching heart cannot be answered from the point of view of this life.

But when we regard the subject from the spiritual world, it presents a very different aspect. What seems to us as death is seen to be entrance into life. What appears to us as failure and defeat of the Lord's purpose is seen to be carrying it out to successful completion. Earth is the seminary of Heaven. The infant and childlike soul is not the bud of an immortal flower broken from its stem and left to wither and die. It is taken up by the living root and transplanted into the paradise above. It is taken from the wintry sphere of this world and placed in the warm spring of the spiritual world, where every faculty will unfold in order, harmony, and fulness.

The doctrines of the New Church give us clear light, and the most consoling assurance upon this subject, which so intimately touches the parental heart. They place us in a position from which we can see it as it is. They throw light upon its darkness, and not only give us the means of solving its enigmas, but they comfort our bereaved hearts; they heal our wounded affections; they show us that the Lord's loving-kindness is as fully manifested in taking them from our natural sight as in giving them to us.

They teach us that all who leave this life in infancy and childhood are saved. The children of heathen as well as Christian parents; the multitudes who are

exposed and left to die by the superstitions of the crowded populations of the East; the offspring of sin and shame—of the worst as well as the best of parents; all are saved. Here we have a third part of the human race sure of heaven, under whatever conditions they may have been born. Here also we find a rich source of consolation for those who have been naturally bereaved. If the Good Shepherd has taken a lamb from your fold, you are sure that it cannot be lost. You are sure that your highest hopes for your child have been fulfilled. You never did ask and you cannot ask for anything better than it has attained. If you had the wealth of the world, you could not surround it with so much beauty, you could not provide it with such abundant and excellent means of comfort and delight, as it now enjoys. If you had the power of the world, you could not protect it so securely from all harm, from every evil influence, from all spiritual and natural danger. If you had the wisdom of the world at your command, you could not direct the unfolding of its spiritual faculties so perfectly. You could not give it so large, so full, so liberal, so complete a culture as it will now attain. You cannot conceive, much less provide, such large, varied, and complete means of development and culture for every faculty of intellect and affection, as the dear child whom the Lord took from your fold and placed within His own has come into full and permanent possession of.

If this is true of those children whose parents have ample means for their wants and education, and who would grow up in a sphere of intelligence and purity in the circle of home and school, what shall we say of

those who would be kept in ignorance; who would be subjected to the contagion of evil influences; whose evil propensities would be stimulated to activity by evil example? The little one, innocent of wrong against the Lord or man, is taken from the midst of influences which could not fail to corrupt its moral nature, and placed in the best conditions for its spiritual health and happiness. How the infinite mercy and wisdom of the Lord shines out in clear light from what has been regarded as a most mysterious dispensation of His providence or permission!

When little children pass into the other life, they are infants and children still. They gain nothing by the mere transition. The little infant which goes from its mother's arms to the arms of the angels is the same little child when it reaches them that it was when it left hers. It is just as weak and ignorant, and needs the same care. If you should see it after it is raised up out of the material body, you would know that it was your child, for it has the same features, the same character; it preserves its individuality. It has left nothing behind that properly belonged to it. It loses nothing!

Many of you have seen what we call the death of children. It is one of the most touching scenes in human experience. Did you ever feel so helpless as when you saw the dear child of your affections going from you, slipping as it were from your hold? Bond after bond is severed. The little hand fails to return the pressure of your own; the lips no longer answer to the mother's voice. You hold them only, as it were, *by the eye*, and the light begins to fade and soon is *gone from that*. The last natural link which bound

them to you is broken, and they have gone—fallen into the dark unknown. That is the too vivid and terrible appearance from this life.

If you could see the other side of the event, how different it would appear! You would see nothing of death. Two companies gather around the little one, invisible to each other. How different their feelings and the offices they perform! We are trying to hold it in this world, and every step of its removal is like breaking one of our heart-strings. We minister to it as long as we can reach it through the material body.


The other company stand with gentle hands and warm hearts to lift it out of the grave of the body, and to welcome it to their own home. They see nothing but life. New affections are awakened in their hearts, new joys fill their souls, as they see new opportunities for the exercise of them, a new being to love and care for. Their thoughts and affections must be somewhat of the same nature, only fuller, closer, and more ardent, as those with which the parent's heart greets the new-born child.

If both sides of the event could be seen by both companies at the same time, what a change it would make in the thoughts and feelings of both! The angels could not but look with compassion upon the sorrowing parents. And what comfort they could give them! Oh sorrowing mother, they would say, grieve not so blindly and wildly. The dear child of your heart is not lost, but saved. It is not dead, but more than ever alive. The good and wise and all-merciful Lord, who loves us with infinitely more depth and tenderness than we can love each other, permits

this transfer of your child from your home below to our home above, for your good, for our good, and for the good of the child. We will love it with an affection as deep and pure as your own; we will supply its every want. We will keep the precious trust for you and restore it to you when you are ready to receive it. We will more than fulfil your fondest hopes and largest expectations.

As you saw the beauty and glory of heavenly wisdom shining in their faces, and the gentleness and purity of heavenly love embodied in all their actions, you could not fail to be comforted with the assurance that your child would want no good which love and wisdom could supply. As you saw it rising out of the material body, leaving disease and pain behind; as you saw life glowing in the face of your child, and its whole form springing into new activity; as you saw it welcomed by, and welcoming, the angel friends, you could not say, My child is dead. You might feel sad that one so dear to you was removed from your care and natural sight. But your sadness would be tempered with a calm and sweet sense of its happiness. You would see that this change is not death; it is transition; it is the springing up of the real child from the earth; it is the transplanting of an immortal life from the garden below to the paradise above. And if you saw this event in any degree of correctness, you would say, The Lord has more than fulfilled my hope. "The Lord gave; the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

In this light one of the most terrible trials of life is *seen to be full of the loving-kindness and tender mercy of the Lord.* The soul is comforted, sustained, and



the healing balm of heavenly consolation is poured into the bleeding heart.

But this source of comfort and hope will be seen to be much larger and more satisfactory as we follow the little children who have passed into the other life to their new homes.

As I said before, all children enter the other world with the same forms, the same natures, and the same attainments, with which they leave this. They need instruction and parental care in that world as much as they would have done if they had remained here. And the Lord does not leave them orphans. He provides a home and instruction for every one.

The spiritual world has so long been regarded as an abstraction, and spiritual beings as formless essences, and consequently without organization, order, or relation to each other, that it is difficult for men to believe that it is a more substantial world than this, and that all its forms are more sharply defined and distinct from each other, and that all the relations of those who dwell there are more specific than they can be in this world. But such is the fact. Heaven is a sphere of growing activities, directed to particular ends. We shall need each other's help more in heaven than we do here, and we can do more for each other. Our happiness will consist in giving and receiving. Heavenly love and wisdom will flow out into heavenly deeds of a precise and specific form. It is the nature of a heavenly life, that each one desires and is in constant effort to communicate his own love and wisdom to others. The more largely he can do it the happier he is.

We can all see what a large and varied field for the

exercise of heavenly affections is opened to the angels in the instruction and care of the little children who are constantly passing into the spiritual world. Accordingly our doctrines teach us that "as soon as infants are raised from the dead, they are carried up into Heaven, and delivered to the care of angels of the female sex, who in the life of the body loved infants tenderly, and at the same time loved God. Since these angels, when in the world, loved all infants from a sort of maternal tenderness, they receive them as their own; and the infants also, from an affection implanted in them, love them as their own mothers."

Thus we see that the tender infants who are taken from the cradle and the mother's arms are not left to perish. They are not crowded into a great orphan asylum and committed to the care of strangers. They go from an earthly to a heavenly home. In most cases they go from a motherly love of a merely natural degree, from a merely animal affection, to a motherly love of a heavenly degree. It is a motherly love purified from all selfish and worldly affections. It is a mother's tenderness imbued with a heavenly tenderness. It is a mother's devotion intensified and exalted by heavenly devotion. It is as much more watchful, patient, and self-sacrificing than any natural affection, as heavenly love is purer, deeper, and holier than any earthly affection. But it is not only ardent, gentle, and pure; it is what a mother's love often is not—it is wise. Wisdom and love go hand and hand in Heaven. The motherly affection of the angels is not weak and foolish. It will not yield to importunity. *It is firm as well as gentle. It can guide and restrain as well as lavish tenderness and minister to wants.*

Each motherly angel receives as many infants into her home as she desires, and no more. Thus infancy, which is one of the most powerful instruments in the development of our affections, and our spiritual culture, in this world, is not wanting to any home in Heaven whose inmates desire it.

Nor are these tender germs of life, just transplanted from the earth, distributed by lot, or assigned in an arbitrary way to any who will take them. They are, as it were, drawn to their homes by a spiritual attraction. As there is an inborn and natural relation between mother and child which draws them together, and adapts them to each other, so there is a spiritual relation between the children and the motherly angels into whose home they are introduced. The love of the angelic mother is not merely an indiscriminating and general benevolence; it is specific. There is a cause in her own nature and in the nature of every child which comes to her home, which determines why that one should be selected rather than another. If a hundred infants were placed in one room, and you desired to obtain one or more of them, to take to your own home and adopt as your own, you would see something in one which would attract you, and something in another which would repel you. You would see something to determine your choice, and all would not choose alike.

This power of perceiving the specific qualities of character is vastly increased in the other life, and this faculty enables the angels to select those children whose natures are most congenial, or whose peculiar qualities of character they are the best qualified to *unfold and wisely direct*. Thus there will be a more

intimate, natural, and tender relation between the angels and the little ones committed to their care, than exists between parents and children in this world.

This care and education of children is not a wearisome task assumed by the angels from a sense of duty. It is not attended with care and anxiety and watching and exhausting labour, for there is nothing of that in Heaven. It is a labour of love. It is a means of giving free play to heavenly affections. It is the unfolding of parental affection purified from all its dross and imperfections, and elevated to a spiritual plane of life. The natural affection is intensified and exalted. It is not prim, cold, and bloodless. It is playful, joyous, spontaneous. It bubbles up and runs over in forms ever-varying and perfect.

These angels are not abstract and bloodless beings, created by a fiat of Omnipotence, without human form or human affection. They are your mothers and grandmothers, who, with renewed youth and exalted affections, are performing a service for your children, which it would have given them the greatest pleasure to perform if they had remained in this world. They minister to their wants. They watch their unfolding faculties with the most joyous delight. They enter into all their innocent and playful affections with genuine sympathy, and grow young by the new life they receive from the Lord through them. They come in contact with new life, and are sharers of its blessings. It is a genuine fountain of youth to them.

These little new-comers from the earth are also received into homes. It is impossible to conceive of *a home* without some definite and distinct habitation

that has a permanent relation to our thoughts and affections; that can become rich with associations; that has an individuality, and a sort of personal relation to our real natures.

This idea of distinct and personal relation is one of the prominent doctrines of the New Church concerning the spiritual world. Instead of being merged in vague and indistinct generalities, everything becomes more clearly defined and individualized. All lines are more sharply drawn. Everything is more distinct to the senses. Unity is not gained by destroying distinctions and merging the individual in the mass. This principle applies both to persons and dwellings.

To float about on a cloud in the regions of space would not be home-like. To join an innumerable multitude in everlasting song would not be home. The very idea of home is opposed to multitudes, to publicity. Home is shelter; it is privacy; it is room for the free play of the most interior personal thoughts and affections.

Little children are received into homes, where they are loved and cherished with the most tender affection. And such homes! There are no such homes on earth. None so quiet, so orderly, so joyous, so full of beauty, so warm and sunny and bright, with light from without and light from within. They are perfectly furnished with every means for comfort, culture, and delight. They are free from all the contagion of evil example. The infant nature unfolds in them like flowers in a rich soil, and in the warm breath of spring. The freest play is given to every heavenly affection. There is the greatest freedom with the most perfect order. *They live in an atmosphere of love, and are*

directed by a wisdom perfectly adapted to their states.

In such homes are our children who have passed into the other life. Free from all disease and pain, from all causes of discomfort and harm, with room for the freest play of all their innocent and child-like affections, happy in the enjoyment of to-day, they will be led on to the attainment of higher good by a process of continued delight.

It is well with our children whom the Good Shepherd has taken to His own fold in Heaven. They are safe beyond all danger, they are happy beyond all contingencies. They are the rich treasures of the heart, laid up in Heaven, where no moth of earthly lust, no rust of falsity, can corrupt, and no thief of passion or deceit can break through and steal their innocence and joy. They will continually grow more fully into eternal youth, beauty, and blessedness.

CHAPTER II.

THE NECESSITY FOR THEIR EDUCATION, AND THE FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS FOR GAINING IT.

ONE of the first questions put by those who hear what the friends of the New Church believe concerning the spiritual world and the nature of human life there, is, How do you know these things? They are interesting and beautiful, that no one can deny. They are what every one who has children in the other world desires to believe. They comfort those who mourn; they assuage the sorrows of the bereaved heart; they satisfy, to some extent at least, the demands of parental love. But how do you know that they are true? How did you learn these things which have been so long hidden from humanity? What evidence can you give to confirm them?

These are proper questions, and New Churchmen take great delight in answering them, though they are not always able to do it to the satisfaction of those who ask them, because they cannot be fully and rationally answered in a few words. No great vital question of natural science, even much less the principles which lie at the foundation of our existence as spiritual beings, can be answered in a few words. We say, for example, that we get these things from Swedenborg.

But that does not satisfy. The question immediately rises, How did he learn them? We answer that his spiritual sight was opened, and that as to his spirit he was admitted into the spiritual world, and actually saw and heard the things which he relates. Then we are met with the customary epithets which are supposed to set aside his testimony—mystic, dreamer, insane. His claims are regarded by the great majority of mankind as unworthy of credence. It is impossible in the nature of things, men say, that he could see and hear such things. If we reply that there are many instances recorded in the Bible of the opening of man's spiritual sight; that the whole Book of the Revelation is a record of what John saw, while, as to his material body, he was in the Isle of Patmos, and, as to his spirit, in the spiritual world; if we say, further, that there are well authenticated instances of the opening of man's spiritual sight, in all ages and among all people, the question comes as quick as the report of a gun after the flash, Why was Swedenborg rather than some one else prepared and commissioned to do this work? and the question is put with a tone of voice which shows more clearly than the words, how absurd they think the claim is. We answer, Swedenborg was selected for the office of making known to man the nature of the spiritual world and of man as a spiritual being, because he was one of the greatest and wisest and best men who ever lived in the world. The history of mankind gives us no example of a more unselfish and devoted lover of the truth than he was.

But we do not ask men to accept what he says merely on his assertion and authority. While we gratefully acknowledge that we could never by our own

power have discovered what he has revealed to us, yet when his disclosures were once made known, we hold that all he has taught us is a proper subject for the exercise of reason. We hold that it ought to be subjected to the test of reason and revelation. We ask every one to give them this test. We are delighted when we can find a man or woman who will do it, for we are quite sure that whoever will do it in a candid spirit, with a sincere desire to know what is true, will find them in full accord with reason and revelation; and that they will stand any test they can apply to them, and satisfy all the real wants of the head and the heart.

We are remanded, therefore, to the intrinsic probability of Swedenborg's disclosures. Let them be judged by their merits; by their coherence with each other; by their accordance with the Divine nature and purpose, and with man's nature.

For example, let us take the subject of the present discourse, The necessity for the education of infants and children in the other life; we can test what Swedenborg says about it by the nature of the human mind itself, and the purpose of the Lord in the creation of man. This is the point of view in which I wish to place you, and from which I wish to view the whole subject. I wish not only to tell you what our doctrines teach us about the condition of children in the other life, and how they are educated, and their whole natures developed into angelic strength and beauty, but I wish to show that this is done according to the laws of the human mind, and the conditions in which the children are placed.

The human mind, composed of will and under

standing, or of the affections and intellect, is man's spiritual nature. It comprises all that belongs to a human being, except the material body. Mind and body are the whole of man. At death the body remains in this world, the mind or spirit goes into the spiritual world. Its nature is not changed by this transition. It remains the same as it was while in the body. Its wants are the same; its powers are the same; its qualities are the same. It has gained no knowledge; it has obtained no new affections. It has simply been raised out of the material body and brought consciously into the spiritual world. Keeping these facts in mind, every one can decide whether what I have to say is intrinsically probable or not; whether it is contrary to Scripture or not.

First, let us see what reason we have to believe that there is any necessity for instruction. So far as we know anything about the human mind, all its knowledge is acquired. It is not innate. The new-born infant has no knowledge. It does not possess the instinct of animals. It is the most ignorant and helpless of created things. It has everything to learn. If it leaves the material body and is born into the spiritual world as soon as it is born into this, it is as ignorant and helpless, and needs care and instruction as much as it would have needed them if it had remained in this world. At whatever age a little child passes into the other world, it is there as it was here.

But while an infant has no actual knowledge, it has the germs of all knowledge; while it has no power of loving actually developed and in exercise, it has the capacity for a seraph's affection. A mere

possibility itself, it has a nature which can be developed beyond any assignable limit. The infant just born has the capacity of passing beyond the present attainments of the highest angel. But this attainment is to be made by the exercise of its faculties. It must learn ; its affections must be called into various play and unfolded by use.

These faculties, or what we may call the nature of the infant, are tainted with hereditary evil. Every child derives its peculiar nature, or specific character, or tendencies, from its parents. The mind of a child is not like a sheet of white paper, or the prepared surface of the photographic plate, passively receiving and retaining every form impressed upon it. It is organic; it is alive. It is like the germ in the seed, or the invisible principle in an egg, which determines the form and colour and nature of the whole plant, or animal which springs from it. These [germs derive their quality from the parent. "Like begets like." The moral as well as the physical nature is hereditary. Moral as well as physical disease is handed down from generation to generation. The natural spontaneous impulses of children are selfish, and no child who was left to the unrestrained indulgence of its natural appetites and passions would grow up to be a good man or woman.

This hereditary evil nature is not sin, it is only a tendency to it. The child is no more to blame for it than it is for having a narrow chest, or a dark complexion. It is no more to blame for it than the negro child is for being black. Sin is the voluntary violation of a known moral law. An evil nature is a tendency to sin.

Every child takes with it all its hereditary nature; all its tendencies to evil. This must be so, because it is the child itself which goes into the other world. It leaves only the material body in this world, which is only a better-fitting garment, woven of material substances, and fashioned in the form of the spiritual body. The subject of education and the necessity for education are the same that they would have been if the child had remained in this world. The conditions and means of education only are changed. The child is placed in far better conditions than it would be possible to find in this world. These conditions are worthy of a passing notice.

The child is freed from the incumbrance and restraint of the material body. The material body in itself is dead. It has no life which the spirit does not give it. It grows slowly; it is feeble and will never bear much strain. It is easily deranged; it is heavy and dull. It is like a veil to the senses—a glove to the hand. In this life we can only approach the child through the obtuse and perverting medium of the body, and the child can only apprehend what comes to it through this medium, and as it comes. How long it takes to get any recognition from the infant; before it can even answer the mother's smile! How much longer before it can understand her words. It requires months and sometimes years before it can walk and articulate words. How many efforts it must make before it can stand, or even sit alone! How long it must coo and mumble before it can speak a word distinctly! How many falls it will catch before it can walk. I doubt *whether we ever do anything in after life so difficult, and so apparently impossible, as walking and speaking.*

But when the infant passes into the other life, it escapes from all the hindrances and limitations of the material body. It is an infantile form. It has the same spiritual body it had before its material body died. Its death was only its resurrection from the material body. The material body is cast upon the spiritual body. Death is withdrawal from the cast. The living mould remains the same.

Freed from this incumbrance, the spiritual body, which is the child itself, develops much more rapidly than it could when imprisoned in the flesh. The little infant from its mother's arms begins to walk immediately, and to express its affections by sounds. It grows up much more rapidly, also, because it does not wait for the slow motions of the material body. It has no dead weight to carry about. Its body is organized of spiritual substances, and moves spontaneously at every effort of the will.

The idea that the soul *grows* seems very absurd to those who have been accustomed to look upon it as a formless essence, or a vital force, and it is absurd from that point of view. How can that which has no form grow? It is a contradiction in terms. But the point of view is false. The spirit is in the human form. The spirit gives form to the material body. The body grows as the spirit grows. We know this from abundant experience. When a little child leaves its material body, the body does not grow any more, but soon turns to dust. There is no power in the elements of matter, in carbon, nitrogen, and phosphorus, to organize themselves into a living body. There is no more power in the food we eat to make brain and muscle, nerve and bone, than there is in the clay to mould itself into

bricks, and in the bricks to arrange themselves into a house. The spirit forms the body. The body grows because the spirit grows. If it is the spirit which weaves the body around it as a garment, why should it cease to grow when it is freed from the body? If the body does not cause its growth, why should it prevent it? Why should it not grow more rapidly until it attains its adult and normal form?

If infants always remained infants in the other life, there would be just ground for the too common idea that the death of an infant is a loss to humanity; a promise unfulfilled; a hope blasted. Delightful as infancy is, and fruitful in innocent joys, every parent would regard it as a terrible calamity if the child, born to-day, was to remain for ever a feeble infant. It is not infancy in itself which has so many charms. It is the sense of progress; the surprises which continually greet the parental heart, caused by newly-awakened powers. The half-opened bud is more beautiful than the full blossom, but it would not be if it was to remain half-opened.

It would be impossible to reconcile the death of infants with the Lord's goodness and wisdom, if the death of the bud was the cessation of all progress; if they were to remain infants for ever. Reason and observation, and the nature of the human mind, and the goodness of the Lord, all unite in declaring that the growth of the spiritual form is not arrested by its separation from the material body. On the contrary, it is brought into better conditions in every respect for more rapid and perfect development. Your little son *or daughter* who passed from the sanctuary of your *home* to the purer and more beautiful homes of the

angels, lost nothing of the means and capacities for growing up into the full stature of angelic manhood or womanhood; on the contrary, gained immensely in every faculty and power of growth and attainment.

What a comfort this would be to you if you would let it have its due weight. How many of us have children in the other world and in this world! If we should compare their conditions in the one particular which determines in which world they live, whether they are in the material body or out of it, how much we should find in favour of those whose bodies we have put tenderly away into the earth. They are free from all physical restraints. They are as free to move as the mind itself. They can be where their thought and affection carry them. Those who remain here are imprisoned in the flesh. They must carry the dead weight of their bodies with them wherever they go; and they are often kept from companionships and delights by those physical impediments. How often they would go and come, if they were not hindered by the body. How much weariness they would escape. How many delights they would share, if by merely thinking and willing they could change their places.

Our children in heaven have escaped all the pain of disease and all the weariness of labour in escaping from the material body. How great a gain that is! If some angel should announce to you when your child is born, This child shall never be sick; shall never suffer a moment's pain, would you not consider it one of the greatest blessings that could be conferred upon it? How much our children suffer, and how much we suffer with them! I do not know a more painful situation than to see a dear child writhing with pain, and

to feel utterly powerless to relieve it, and how often we are called upon to sustain this trial! How many diseases they are exposed to! There is no day without some danger from exposure; from their own imprudence. How much they suffer from hunger and from cold! How few children there are in the world who have a really happy childhood!

But those who have gone into the other life never fail to have it. Not one. Those who go from the poorest and foulest homes, as well as those who go from the best, gain entire freedom from all physical infirmity.

When the merciful and loving angel of the Lord came for our children, then he took them from all weariness, all hunger, all the torments of cold and heat, all the weakness of pain and disease. He gave us more than we could ever ask or hope for while they remained in this world. If we could see those who have gone and those who remain, side by side, we could not ask the Lord to let them come back, we could not grieve over their removal from earth. As we saw them rosy with perfect health, strong, vigorous, elastic; all manly and noble qualities crowning the heads of our sons, and the dignity of wisdom embodied in their forms, and flowing forth in every graceful movement; as we saw the loveliness and purity of heaven blossoming like half-open roses in the faces of our daughters, and the grace of the angels swaying every motion, the beauty of the angels embodied in their forms, and their whole natures imbued with the modesty, the gentleness, and sweetness of the angels, we could not *but* confess that the Lord had done better for those *whom He had taken into His own fold than we can do*

for those who still remain with us. How could we fail to be thankful that the Lord had made us instruments in giving existence to beings who are the subjects of so much happiness, a happiness which will continue to increase in variety, intensity, and fulness of joy to eternity.

But they are not only freed from all physical restraints and imperfections, from weariness and pain, and sickness of every form. They are also removed from the temptations to evil which assail them on every side in this world. This is the reason why they will never sin, though their hereditary nature is evil. In the other life they are carefully removed from every influence which would have any power to call it into activity, and they are surrounded with attractions whose whole influence tends to develop their good affections. This repression of the evil tendencies of their hereditary natures is not effected by restraint and coercion. The angels to whose care they are committed do not shut them up, and by so doing hope to exclude temptation. Their minds are so pre-occupied and filled with heavenly delights, that they have no time for anything else. The wheat gets such a start in the ground of their affections, that the tares have no chance to grow, while in this life it is too often the reverse. The hereditary nature is like the germ of a plant which remains dormant.

They become regenerate there as we do here. The necessity is the same and the process is the same. There is no possibility of entering heaven and living in it in the full consciousness and enjoyment of its blessedness until we are born from above, until we *have a heavenly nature*. We must receive the King-

dom of heaven before we can enter into it, as we must receive eyes before we can enter into the kingdom of light.

But while the necessity for regeneration still remains, and the means by which it is effected are the same with our children in the other life that it is with those who remain here, it is much more easily effected with them, because there are not so many difficulties in their way. They are not exposed to temptation, and they form no evil habits. They have no sins to repent of, they have no evils to subdue and put away. There is no difficulty in itself in leading a heavenly life. The whole difficulty consists in laying down the evil one. The love of self and the world grows strong and hardens into habit in this life before we begin a heavenly life. We have much to unlearn and undo. Our spiritual natures are like the land of Canaan before the Israelites entered it. They are preoccupied with powerful enemies, who have entrenched themselves in strongholds, who are brave and cunning and skilful in the use of every weapon of offence and defence. We have to conquer them and drive them out. What a long and weary and painful contest it is! How often we are defeated and taken captive! What slow progress we make! How often we despair!

Our little ones who have passed into the other world are saved from all this labour and conflict, this weariness and despair. They have no such hindrances. They are exposed to no temptations; they have formed no evil habits; they have imbibed no false principles they have cherished no evil affections. There are no enemies to oppose them. How blessed is their con-

n! Free from sin and error; with ardent and
gent and tender natures, open to every heavenly
ence, with what delight they will receive every
only truth! How their hearts will glow with
to the Lord and to each other! How rapidly
natures will unfold!

us we find the necessity for learning truth and
egeneration the same in the other life as in this.
nature and laws of the mind are the same. The
e of the child is not changed. It is an infant still.
in the form and stature of a child. It will never
anything which it does not learn. It will never
the blessedness of an affection which it does not
ise. But its condition is vastly improved. It has
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d by the material body. It is removed from all
tation; it never becomes enslaved by any evil
s; it has nothing to unlearn. It is a real being
real world, surrounded by everything that is per-
adapted to call all its faculties into play; and
mitted to the care of those who know how to
every secret spring in its nature, it must rapidly
op into the strength, beauty, and loveliness of an

CHAPTER III.

THE METHODS OF EDUCATING THEM.

THE Lord has endowed man, the crowning work of His hands, with the possibility of endless progression. There is no assignable limit beyond which he may not pass. The more he knows, the more he is capable of knowing. The more we put into the mind, the more capacious it becomes. Every new idea is a new vessel to receive, and a new power to give. Our affections and all our intellectual faculties gain strength and depth and capacity by exercise, and they will continue to do so for ever.

The laws of mental and spiritual growth are not changed by passing out of the material body and coming consciously into the spiritual world. On the contrary we are brought into better conditions for the exercise and development of every faculty which has been perverted by evil. We escape the trammels of time and space by escaping from the material body, and we come into a world where everything is specifically related to us.

Life in the spiritual world is a continuation of this. The death of the material body is no more an interruption to our life than sleep is. When we rise in the spiritual world we begin where we left off here, just as

we begin in the morning where we left off when we went to sleep at night.

The infant, therefore, has everything to learn, the same as if it had remained in this world. It has to be taught. It must have teachers and schools, methods and implements, for nothing can be done in any world without the means of doing it. The Lord uses means to accomplish His ends. The instruction is more perfect in the other life, because the mind is in a better state to receive, because the teachers are wiser, and the means better adapted to the end. But this we shall see as we enter more particularly into the subject.

Our first inquiry naturally is, What are our children taught? To answer the question in one sentence, I should say, *to be useful*; to love the Lord and the neighbour, and to carry their love into practical effect by doing all they can to promote the highest good of all. The angels teach our little ones who have passed to their care, what we ought to teach our children who remain with us—to be useful. We have to learn many things in this world by slow and painful processes, which they do not. But it is all for the same purpose. We learn to read that we may gain knowledge, and we gain knowledge that we may use it for the good of others. We learn trades, arts, and professions, as means to gain a living and perform a use in the world. Those who have passed into the other life are freed from what we may call the mechanical and material part of education. They have not to learn to read as our children do, by an outward and mechanical way, though they have books in the spiritual world and learn to *read them*. But no one has any knowledge which he

does not gain by the exercise of his mental faculties. The little child has no innate knowledge of the Lord or of his own nature—he must gain it.

It may strike some persons as a novel, if not an absurd idea, that we are to learn to be *useful* in the other life, because the idea is so prevalent that the rest of Heaven consists in doing nothing. But this is a total mistake. Happiness does not consist in idleness. If it did we should be happiest when we were asleep. A stone in the street, or a dead log in the fields, or a mummy well embalmed, would be perfect types of rest and happiness. Rest for the mind is not inaction. It is harmonious and orderly activity. Rest for the affections is not ceasing to love. It is loving proper objects, and having our love received and reciprocated. It is love embodied in act; love communicated by word and deed. Hope and fruition go hand in hand in Heaven.

Instead of having less to do in the other life, we shall have more. The occupations will be more numerous, and they will continue to increase to eternity as our knowledge increases. Truth is infinite. The more we know, the more we shall see there is to be known. Gaining ideas does not exhaust knowledge. Discovering a new method of doing a particular work is not one step towards the limits of invention. Every new invention leads to many others. This will continue to be so for ever in this world; and the principle will exist much more fully in the spiritual world.

It is a law of Divine wisdom that we should enjoy life by living. By giving to others we receive more abundantly from the Lord. Heaven is a life of the *most* active use. It is the outflowing of heavenly

affections into every beautiful form; into speech and act and deed. The more perfect the speech—the more lovely the deed, the more fully the love will be communicated and the more lively the joy. The activities of Heaven will be the perfection of happiness because they will not be forced, because they will be spontaneous—the play of the affections, and not the servile labour of compulsion.

If we look at our own natures, we shall see that all delight flows from activity in some form, and the more ardent the affections the greater the activity. The idea, therefore, that every one is to be initiated into some use, is in accordance with all we know of man's nature. It is the Divine method of making human beings happy.

One of the first things, therefore, that children are taught is that the Lord is their Father, and that every good thing comes from Him, and is His gift to them. They are, therefore, continually initiated into knowledge concerning Him: their thoughts and affections are led to Him. At the same time they are taught that they must love their companions and teachers; and they are initiated into the exercise of the truths they are taught. Precept and practice go hand in hand.

Herein is one of the great perfections of education in the other life. Children are taught the truth in doing it and by doing it. They learn as they live and by living. Knowledge of which they have no present use is not stored up with the idea that it may sometime become useful. Indeed there is no separation of truth and life as there is in this world. They see the *practical* use and force of every truth as it is

learned. They see the necessity for it. Education is something more than *instruction*. It is the calling forth of all the spiritual faculties into full, harmonious action. It is not cramming the memory with words which have no meaning to the child. It is not driving them to repeat a given number of terms by fear. It is calling their own affections and thoughts into play by processes of delight. It is sport rather than hard study. It is the wise direction and proper gratification of awakened curiosity, and not its suppression. Our children in Heaven are not shut up in close rooms, and compelled to sit hour after hour in dreary confinement, poring over repulsive tasks. Their schools are more like holiday excursions without their fatigue and exhaustion, in which new and interesting objects are continually appearing to call forth their affections and instruct their minds.

A common, delightful and most effectual method of instruction is by representatives. In the spiritual world everything which surrounds the inhabitants represents their state of love and intelligence. Their outward world is a perfect picture and symbol of their characters. Their houses, their furniture, their clothing, and the scenery around them, are a mirror in which the specific character of the inhabitants can be seen. The principle is the same we see in operation everywhere in this world, only it is carried into full and specific effect there. Our dress and habitation; our employments and amusements; our furniture and books, and ornaments, indeed everything we touch, bears the impress of our characters. Every house has *its* peculiar expression. The carpet and the chairs *and the bed and the closets and the table all speak*.

And if we could fully control them, they would speak much louder and more truly than they do now. Suppose every woman had the means of clothing herself as she chose, and that she was compelled to choose for herself, would not her dress reveal her taste, her pride, or humility, her neatness or the want of it?

In the spiritual world every external thing is the exponent of some internal principle, and the inhabitants have a perception of their meaning. The ideas and affections assume corresponding forms and make the outward world of every one, and when occasion requires, they can create forms which represent the truth or affection they wish to teach.

For example : Suppose an angel wished to give the children he or she was instructing an idea of the nature of innocence. Instead of giving the child a description of innocence in words to commit to memory, or of explaining it in an abstract way, the teacher would create a living representation of innocence, and cause it to pass like a vast panorama before the children. It may be a beautiful landscape through which they wander for hours. This landscape is filled with every lovely thing which is the embodiment of innocence in its various forms and relations. The most delicate and lovely flowers spring up around them wherever they go. Lambs, and every beautiful and harmless form of animal life, act out their natures in sportive gambols. Lovely birds fill the air with song. Groups of heavenly children, clothed in beautiful garments, singing heavenly songs, and engaging in innocent sports, are seen on the lawns and in the groves. Their very sports are an exhibition of innocence in *some of its forms*. Their garments illustrate it. In

nocence speaks in the tones of their voices. It is expressed in pantomime in their gestures. It shines in their faces and is set forth to the life in all the objects which surround them. As the little pupils enter into this scene, innocent affections become awakened in their own hearts, they have a perception of the meaning of the whole scene and of each particular part of it. They see it acted out to the life. They see innocence itself in form. After an hour or day of delight, they return to their homes with a perfect image of the nature and form of innocence indelibly impressed upon their minds. There is no labour in giving or receiving instruction in this way. The heavenly teachers enter into the representation with as much delight as the heavenly pupils. The representation is indeed the outbirth of their own affections. They get a clear and more accurate idea of the nature of innocence from this embodiment of it in outward forms; their hearts glow with a more heavenly ardour; they see more clearly the depth and richness of the Divine goodness, and their hearts open more fully to the Lord to receive it from Him.

The children, also, are instructed that these forms which have so delighted them come from the Lord; that the whole representation came from Him, and was a partial and finite form of innocence in Him. Thus they are taught to connect everything with the Lord; to look upon it as His gift, and a token of His love.

Sometimes a single object will appear which is the symbol of some thought and affection. It may be a *flower*, whose colour and fragrance fully express the *idea*. It may be a bird, whose form and plumage and

song and graceful motions represent it. It may be an animal, or a garment, or some change in the appearance of the world around them. I think we can all see that this is the perfection of teaching. It is impossible to conceive of any more efficient method of communicating truth. If we wish to give a child an idea of a plant or landscape, how much more quickly and clearly it can be done by showing it to him, than it can by any verbal description. No words can convey to the mind such a clear and distinct idea of the terrible passions of man as a battle conveys.

In these heavenly schools there is not only the perfection of method and the command of every facility necessary to effect the desired end, but there are other elements which add vastly to the superiority of their instruction and their rapid progress in knowledge.

The objects themselves are more beautiful and attractive than the things of this world. Spiritual substances are so much more excellent than any material substances, that everything made of them excels every earthly quality and form. The flowers are not only brighter in colour and more beautiful in form than any earthly flowers, but they shine as from an inward light. They are as it were a creation from those who are present; the natural representation of principles which exist within them. They change, therefore, with their changing states. They change, as the expression of the face and the gestures of the body change as the thoughts and affections are exalted or depressed. They are, therefore, a constant revelation to us of our own states, and of the states of those around us. *They have a personal relation to us, and speak to us*

more clearly and specifically than the outward world in this life can.

They also teach us of higher things and of our more immediate relation to the Lord. We can, indeed, see the Lord's goodness reflected in nature, in this life. But the idea is vague and general, and comes by way of inference. If our food and clothing came to us every day without any special agency of our own, as gifts from the Lord, we should see the Lord's goodness in them. They would remind us of Him, as a gift reminds us of the kindness of our friend. Now it is true that the material universe and everything in it is a perpetual creation from the Lord. It is new every morning, and fresh every evening. It does not, however, seem so to us. But in the spiritual world everything is specifically related to us, and seems to be a special gift to us. It is, therefore, a perpetual reminder of the Lord; it brings us as it were into more direct relations to Him.

Thus the child is led to look to the Lord. Every object reminds it of the Lord; connects its thought with Him and calls forth its affections to Him. Thus it is constantly led into the practice of the first commandment, to love the Lord with all the heart, and its faculties unfold in true order. It regards everything from a central point of view, and sees it in its true light.

We see everything in this world as it were upside down. We look upon the web of creation on the wrong side. We mistake the appearance for the reality, the means for the end. We reverse the true order of life, and chase the shadows of the good and true, while we lose sight of the substance. Con-

quently we are continually led astray, and must be constantly retracing our steps. Much of the labour of life is spent in unlearning, and setting ourselves right; in correcting false views, and breaking up bad habits.

The Lord seems to be so remote from us, that it is difficult to connect Him with the constant operations of nature; so many agencies interpose between us and Him, that it is difficult to recognize His goodness in our food and clothing, and our daily means of comfort and culture. It is so difficult that multitudes do not think of Him, and some do not believe in His existence even, much less in His constant providential care.

But it is not so with our children in Heaven. They are led as it were into the presence of the Lord by everything they see and hear and enjoy. Their food and garments and beautiful habitations, and all the lovely objects around them, are gifts from the Lord and tokens of His love. They are the forms and messages of His love to them. Every new object is a new token of it. Their affections are newly awakened by new and beautiful surprises. As they advance in knowledge they find new flowers in their gardens; new species of birds sing new songs; the sun shines brighter, the air is purer, the waterfall sparkles with new light; new and more beautiful garments appear in their wardrobes; new ornaments adorn their rooms. And all these things are the gift of the Lord. Seeing this, their hearts open more largely to Him. Their natures expand, their power to perceive grows more acute, they come into clearer light, and are drawn nearer to the Lord. Every new idea is imaged and

reflected in new forms in everything around them. In this way their affections are elevated to the Lord and centred in Him. The chords of love which bind them to Him are continually strengthening.

They are also taught and led into the constant practice of loving each other. They are educated together. Those of a genius adapted to be useful to each other, and none others, are brought into one family, and associate with each other.

Children do not like to be alone. They are social, and they have more influence upon each other than the most persistent formal instruction. One bad associate will do more to pervert an innocent nature than much patient instruction and many good examples can correct.

How happy in this respect are our children in Heaven. In this world they corrupt each other. They cannot go into the streets without hearing some profane word, or seeing some evil deed. They teach what is false and evil to each other at home. The parents develop evil passions within them, and by precept and example lead them away from the Lord rather than to Him. The moral atmosphere in the best of homes, in the school and street, in city and country, is tainted; and it is impossible to escape from its influence.

But our children in heaven are free from all these influences. They help each other to love what is good and true. Each one is alive with love from the Lord, and exercises it towards all his companions. Every one in the little circle of home stands between all the *others* and the Lord, and communicates that love to *them* in a form peculiar to himself. Each one is like


a choice flower in a bouquet, which gives a new colour, a new perfume, and a new beauty to the whole.

We must not think of these angelic children as all cut after one pattern, as an assemblage of negatives and insipid proprieties. Heaven is not a perpetual Sabbath in the Puritan sense. It is a state of glowing and ever-varying activity. The innocent affections of the children are called into constant play. Education is not repression. It is what it truly signifies, the drawing forth of all the intellectual faculties into harmonious and joyous play. The most of the commandments in this world are negative. They begin with "Thou shalt not." In the other life they become affirmative. They are laws of life leading to good. There are no negatives in the heavenly language. There are no such words as "must not," and "do not." Education is direction, not restraint. The faculties of the spirit unfold from within, like a blossom. The affections are primary, and lead and give form to the thoughts. The thoughts are forms of the affections. There is no separation between the will and the understanding. Every truth springs from the heart, and is learned by heart, in the true sense of the term. Thus education is life itself, a lovely, harmonious, beautiful, happy life.

It may be difficult for us to conceive what one child can do for another, when each one has all its natural wants supplied. But we must remember that every one not only preserves his individuality in the other world, but becomes more distinctly himself. Heaven is not sameness, but constant variety. Nor is it *composed of opposites*, but of homogeneous natures.

This harmony of varieties gives endless scope to the exercise of affection and thought. Each one receives the Divine life in a different form from another. There is something novel to all in every one; there are perpetual and interesting surprises. As every one in Heaven loves all others better than himself, he is more interested in what another says and does than in his own thoughts and affections. This, as every one can see, would open an exhaustless field for communion. When two children came together, each would be interested in the other's form of thought. He would find the other a complement of his own. Thus the greater number of persons he was brought into contact with, the more complete would be his own life; the more he would find to give and to receive.

Thus by heavenly methods they learn truth for heavenly uses, and they use it as they learn it. Knowledge is simply the means of attaining their ends for the time. Every step is a clear and distinct attainment. It is an advance of the whole nature. The head does not outstrip the heart, nor the heart the head. All the faculties unfold in true order, and keep equal pace. There is a roundness and fulness and completeness of culture in every stage of progress. Every day is bright with joys, because knowledge is simply the way to attain them. The knowledge of every day is equal to their wants. So there is satisfaction and contentment in what they learn and do, and a constant enjoyment and peace. They live in the present. Their whole being is so absorbed in what they learn and do and enjoy, that they have no care for the morrow, no regret for the past. Their whole life is an eternal now, and an eternal joy.



I have heretofore spoken more of the general principles which control and regulate the lives of children when they enter the other world. I think it will interest you, and give you a clearer idea of their life, to carry these general principles out to their legitimate consequences; to mention some of the particular things which they do, and the particular influences which must be continually operating with a silent but ever-active power, to develop their affections and strengthen their minds.

They are committed to the care of those who understand their natures, and know how to teach and guide them. Such is the perfection of purely spiritual conditions, that those who are best adapted to each other, and can be of the most use to each other, are brought together. Thus every child is committed to the care of those who, of all the innumerable hosts of heaven, are the best fitted to its peculiar nature. The Lord provides for them the best educators in the universe. The children are committed to the care of those who understand their peculiar genius, and know how to touch the secret springs of their natures and call forth their affections in due order and form. They know how to enter into their motives and life, and to adapt means to their particular wants.

We know how impossible it is always to find such teachers in this world. Parents themselves do not know how to manage their children. How few of us fully understand our children. How few have the wisdom to choose the best methods of government and instruction, or to apply them when selected. We have not the skill; we have not the patience; we are *wanting in that spiritual love, which looks only to the*

spiritual good of the child. We constantly make mistakes, sometimes from weakness and importunity, granting indulgence when we should withhold it, and at others acting with too much severity from anger. How often do we see our children taking the first steps in an evil course, and feel that we are powerless to prevent it. How often from ignorance or folly or selfishness, do we help them on in the development of the loves of self and the world.

Our children are gathered in such great numbers in schools that there is no possibility of knowing their individuality of character and peculiar mental genius. The same instruction, the same methods, the same motives are applied to the bold and timid; to the quick and slow of apprehension; the active and the indolent. The consequence is that all must suffer more or less.

The teachers will also have their likes and dislikes. It cannot be otherwise. The children, too, will have theirs. They grow out of their natures. Neither are to blame for it. If, to this want of knowledge and skill and natural adaptation, we add the evil influences to which they are exposed, we can form some faint idea of the difference of condition between our children in Heaven and on earth.

But let us look for a moment at one. The natures of the children are open and ingenuous. Their minds are transparent. They have no concealments. They have such entire confidence in those to whose care they are committed that they lay bare their inmost souls to them; not from a sense of duty, but from a sweet ingenuousness and innocence—from that perfect love which casts out fear. Their motives are as open

as their faces. What freedom this absence of all fear and apprehension must give them. What rest and peace will mingle with all their delights. They will love those who take care of them, and the love will be fully reciprocated. Thus the child and the angel-guide will be interiorly united, and happy in what is given and received. Life will be a flow of delight. Their natures will unfold as blossoms do in spring-time. They have perfect teachers. Think of it. Perfect in every quality of head and heart.

Their homes are perfect in every quality and form; what we may call their outward conditions, their surroundings, are perfectly adapted to their genius and all the wants of their natures. They are all instrumental in calling forth the affections and educating the intellect. The law is the same which is in universal operation in this world, but it is carried out to perfection there. Every parent who loves his children desires to provide them with a comfortable home, and to surround them with objects whose silent but constant influence will tend to elevate and ennoble their characters. The desire and love of doing this comes from the Lord; it is the result of His providential care for His children while in this world. He has made the whole world beautiful and attractive for this purpose. But matter is so hard and difficult to deal with, and men are so selfish and perverse, and so eager to lavish everything upon their own lusts, that it is impossible to provide beautiful homes for all, or to make beautiful homes contribute to the spiritual culture of all those who dwell in them.

But in Heaven it is not so. There are no hindrances to carrying into perfect effect the desire of the Lord to

have all His children surrounded with everything which can in any way contribute to their comfort, culture, and delight.

Such is the nature of spiritual substances, that the homes of every one in the spiritual world can be specifically and exactly adapted to all the wants of their natures—to their highest spiritual and intellectual, as well as to their lowest natural, wants. Food, clothing, and habitation are given to every one in the other life by the Lord. There is, therefore, no want of means, or of wisdom, or power to make them perfect; that is, perfectly adapted to the nature, tastes, and wants of every one.


These three necessities demand the greatest share of our care and labour in this world, and they constitute the most efficient means of moral and intellectual culture. Let us look at them for a moment, and see what they must be in the other life, and how effectively they must serve the ends of the Lord in communicating delight.

First, let us consider the subject of dress. We all know what a powerful influence dress has upon the minds of children, and adults too, in this world. What attainment in after life ever fills the heart of the child so brimful of delight as the first trousers, or the first pair of boots, or the first dress which marked a stage in the progress of the child towards girlhood or womanhood. No colours in after years are ever so bright, no pattern so beautiful.

After supplying the wants of the body for protection and comfort, dress reaches the mind and clothes it with ideas, and stimulates its affections. How much it cultivates the taste, and in the selfish and worldly nature develops pride, and fills the mind with vanities.

In the other world, the clothing its inhabitants wear means far more than it does here. It is the embodiment and expression of their ideas. The dress which each one wears has a personal fitness which it is impossible to attain in this life—a fitness of colour, of form, of texture and material. It fits the affections and thoughts and the taste and the whole mind as well as the body. Every child will be clothed in a dress which represents its innocence, and intelligence, and individuality of character. It will feel its fitness; it will perceive its beauty, and it will rejoice in it. Every ornament will have a meaning; it will be an exponent of its thought and affection, and consequently it will be a constant source of delight. It will always be new and fresh, and a source of new pleasure. Recall the greatest delight you ever felt on the attainment of any new article of clothing, and you may gain some faint idea of the pleasure which our children in the other life constantly derive from their dress.

But although their clothing is beautiful beyond the power of language to express, and is a source of constant delight, it does not minister to any evil passion. It does not beget pride or foster vanity. They see the fitness and admire the beauty, not only of their own garments but of those of their companions, and this perception calls forth their affection for their companions and for those to whose care they are committed. They take as much or more delight in the beauty of their companions' dress as they do in their own. They regard it as a gift of the Lord also, and thus it calls forth and elevates their affections to Him. So it becomes an instrument of culture and delight.



According to the same law, the house they live in is adapted to their tastes, to their minds, and nothing is wanting that can in any way contribute to their good. It is the embodiment of all their desires. The first or most essential use of a house is protection from storm, from heat and cold, and to serve as a common centre in which the whole family can gather, and a place where expression can be given to the more interior, personal, and private affections. Spiritual beings have the sense of these wants. They need a common centre, and privacy for the free play of the more interior, personal and delicate affections. They need a home as much as we do; and it is impossible to conceive of a home without a house, or of a house without rooms, and the more excellent the house the more various the apartments.

Applying the general principle, that the Lord provides houses for those who dwell in Heaven, and keeping in mind the perfection of spiritual substances, we necessarily come to the conclusion that the homes of our children in Heaven must be beautiful and pleasant beyond our powers of conception. They must surpass the most beautiful dwellings on the earth, more than they surpass the most wretched hovels of savage tribes.

They are built of more excellent materials, as spiritual substances are more excellent than matter. There are earths, and all things of the mineral and vegetable kingdoms in the spiritual world, as well as in this. They exist, indeed, in much greater variety. There are precious stones and the most beautiful woods, and materials for garments, as silk and wool. The earth is as solid to the tread of spiritual feet as

this earth is to the tread of ours. But still all these things are spiritual in form and substance.

Swedenborg describes some of the dwellings which he was permitted to see. He says their form is the embodiment of architecture. It is an expression of the art itself, that is, in size, form, proportion, materials, location, ornamentation, and arrangement within and without; all the parts are perfectly fitted to each other, and to those who dwell in them. They are the embodiment of their affections and thoughts. There is not a single thing in them which is not of some use, and which has not a beauty according to use; nor is there anything wanting which could in any way gratify the taste or contribute to the happiness of those who dwell in them. Every child and adult has the room of his choice. He finds everything in it he wants. It is as large as his thought; it is as beautiful as his tastes. Everything in the furniture and ornaments, in bed and closet and wardrobe; in colour and material; in light and shade and form, perfectly corresponds to his wants—not merely to his bodily wants, but to the wants of his whole nature. The same is true of everything without the house. The street, the lawn, the grove, the garden, the orchard, the landscape.

Take the garden for an example. It will contain those flowers, and fruit-bearing vines, and shrubs, and trees, which would most delight the children. There would be nothing which did not interest them, and there would be nothing wanting which could in any way gratify any taste or contribute any delight. Every plant would speak to them. Its form, colour, fragrance, its leaves and fruit, would be the embodiment of some affection and some form of thought. It would


be a mirror in which some phase of interior life would be variously and perfectly reflected.

The outward beauty, grandeur and glory which surround them, is only a small part of its value. It is their sympathy with it; its connection with their inward lives. It does not oppress them. It is not a cold artificial splendour which merely dazzles. It is warm with the life of the heart; it is natural. They feel at home in it, as we feel at home in the scenes of our childhood. It is as though all the associations of the past with any sense were gathered into one moment, and went thrilling through affection and thought.

But notwithstanding this familiarity, this sense of rest and contentment in these scenes of beauty and grandeur, the familiarity and commonness does not dull the edge of curiosity, or diminish the zest of delight. They are ever new. They give the unfolding natures of our children continual surprises. Not startling and unpleasant ones, but surprises which are the fulfilment of dim prophecies within them. Thus they never tire of their homes.

But the supreme excellence of the richness and beauty of their outward world consists in the fact that its whole influence elevates and purifies their affections, draws out their love for each other, and opens their hearts more fully and interiorly to the Lord. It is a constant reminder to them of the Lord's goodness to each one of them. It not only begets in them a knowledge of their dependence upon the Lord, but a growing delight in being dependent, and in feeling that they are.

The natural man cannot bear much prosperity in this world. He is prone to settle down in useless and



destructive luxury, if he can command the means of indulging his appetites. If he has power, he becomes tyrannical; if he has knowledge and genius, he is proud, and claims admiration and indulgence. So we have to be beaten, and crossed, and pinched with want, and to make our way through mountains of difficulty. Like some plants, we have to be continually clipped in, or we should not bear any spiritual fruit. Indulgence spoils our children.

But in the other life it is not so. Loving what is good and true, the more they indulge their affections and tastes the better they become.

We must not think of their life, however, as one of luxurious indulgence and sensuous gratification. They have their uses, which tax their powers to the utmost. I say uses, not tastes, or duties, because we associate with these words something of constraint and arbitrary force. Children in this world delight in exercising their powers to the utmost verge of endurance, where led by their delights.

Infants in the other life are sent to infants in this, and they take great delight in associating with them, and perform an important use in the development of their innocent natures. I have no doubt that the spiritual sight of infants and little children in this world is often opened, and that they see their heavenly companions, and the beautiful spiritual scenery which surrounds them. It is not merely from an internal influence that they crow and laugh, and the whole body seems to be moved with delight. It is not merely a poetic fancy that

“Heaven lies about us in our infancy.”

It is a beautiful reality. Our little ones see beings invisible to our grosser sight, and their tender natures become imbued with something of their heavenly sweetness and purity.

Those who have a taste for it, learn to play on instruments of music, and to sing songs which perfectly express their heavenly affections. They have not only harps, but instruments of every kind; and their music is incomparably grander and more joyous and elevating than any upon earth. Indeed, our noblest songs in this world are only some broken chords and snatches of the harmonies of the other life, which have floated down and been caught by the sensitive ears of the great masters of song in this world.

Boys are boys there as well as here. They have masculine tastes, a boy's love of action. They are enterprising, confident, and daring. They love competition. They delight in sports which test their strength and skill, and give free play to all their bodily and intellectual faculties. But they are guarded and guided with such wisdom by their heavenly teachers that they engage in those pastimes only which serve as a relaxation, and which tend to beget and cultivate generosity and kindness of nature, strength and dignity of bearing, and grace of movement.

According to the same law, girls are girls. They delight in those offices and recreations which are feminine, but not effeminate. They grow up into a lovely womanhood, and gain its strength and beauty and grace and innocence by the exercise of those qualities in their daily lives. They are gay and joyous; their *happiness* flows forth in song and laughter and innocent sports, and in the free and orderly play of every *feminine* grace.

Boys and girls associate with each other, and influence each other for good. The girls soften and subdue the natural robustness of the boys, and tone down their tendency to wild force. The boys in turn give strength and dignity to feminine gentleness. They give variety and completeness to social life. Thus they grow up in the midst of influences which tend to cherish the good, the beautiful, and the true in their natures. They breathe an atmosphere of love and purity. They walk in paths of wisdom, and they find them ways of pleasantness and peace. They grow towards the perfection and prime of an eternal manhood and womanhood. Every faculty unfolds in true order and harmony. Their characters are well balanced, and complete at every step; and yet they admit of continual advancement.

Such is an imperfect view of what our doctrines teach us concerning the condition of those who pass into the other life in infancy. It is not a mere idle fancy. It is based upon the nature of the spiritual world and well-established laws of human nature. It is well calculated to comfort those whose little ones have passed into that life. It assures them that it is well with them, and shows how the Lord's goodness and mercy may be as fully shown in taking the lambs from our flock into His own fold as by giving them to us at first. Blessed innocents, they are safe from all the temptations and trials of this life. They will never suffer hunger or cold or fatigue or pain. They will never be pinched by want. They will never be tormented by fear, or stung by pangs of remorse. They will never want any good. They will go on

from step to step in the knowledge of truth, and in the attainment of wisdom and happiness for ever. The cup of life will always be full of the richest joys they are able to receive from the Lord, and its capacities will continue to enlarge to eternity.

CHAPTER IV.

THE DEATH OF CHILDREN A MINISTRY OF GOOD TO PARENTS.

THE Lord is a being of infinite love and wisdom. All that He does, therefore, must be done from pure love, and in an absolutely perfect way. He must regard the highest good of all in everything which He provides, permits, and prevents. The Lord never permits the smallest evil to come upon any human being when it could be prevented without causing a greater evil. All the bereavements, the sorrow, and suffering of humanity are a less evil than their prevention would be, in the condition in which men now are.

Nor is this sum of general good obtained by striking a balance and setting the general good against individual suffering. "The Lord is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works." In every bereavement He regards the good of those who suffer as well as those who are saved from it. In the removal of children to the other life, He looks to the good of the parents as well as the children. We can see some respects in which the children are gainers by being taken out of a world of sin and sorrow, and committed to the care of the angels in a world where

death and sorrow cannot enter. If we could see its effects upon the sorely smitten parents, we should find the wisdom and loving-kindness of the Lord as fully shown towards them as towards the beloved ones He had taken from the circle of their homes. The Lord never takes away the least good from us without giving us a greater one in return. He gives us our children to be a blessing to us—He takes them from us naturally to give them to us more fully spiritually. It may not be possible for us, blinded as we are by evil and falsity, and smarting with the pain of separation, to see clearly and fully how our afflictions can be turned into blessings. But the nature of the Divine Providence necessitates the conclusion, and in the light of the Divine Truth embodied in our doctrines we may be able to see some things in which the removal of our children may be a blessing to us.

By the removal of our children to the spiritual world, the Lord teaches us a lesson concerning their ownership, which we are slow to learn. He teaches us that they are not our own; that they are His children. He makes us instrumental in their creation, and binds them to us by the most tender ties. He commits them to our care, and enriches the commission with a multitude of blessings. He opens new fountains of love in the parental heart, and calls a great variety of affections into activity, and develops the whole nature on a certain plane of life. Let any father or mother conceive all the affection, the thought, the culture and discipline and delight every child has given them to be taken from them, would it not leave *an immense void* in their natures. These joys which *daily flow* into the heart from this source; this constant

culture and discipline, this enlargement of our natures, is the reward the Lord gives us for our service. The reward is so great, and they become bound to us by so many ties that we almost unconsciously claim them as our own, and feel that we have a right to do what we please with them.

But this is not so. They are the Lord's. He has the only absolute ownership in them. They are committed to us in trust to take care of, to educate, and train up for Heaven. They are given to us for the same purpose that those who are removed to the other life are given to the angels, and we have no right to educate them for any other purpose than for His service. We ought to regard them as most precious trusts committed to our care by our heavenly Father for a specific purpose, and we ought to be scrupulously faithful in discharging it, and ready to resign it when the Lord calls upon us to do so.

When a child is taken from us, it reminds us of this great truth. It helps us to see more clearly that they are not our own, and it leads us to scrutinize our actions, to see whether we have been faithful or not in the discharge of our duty. It tends to place our relation to our children in a true light.

Suppose you regarded every one of your children as the Lord's; as given to you in trust with great rewards for your care, to train up for Heaven; suppose you should keep this truth directly before you; would it not have a most powerful influence over your motives and methods of care and instruction of your children? Would you not inquire, How shall I acquit myself of this trust? How shall I educate these children that *they may become sons and daughters of the Lord?*

a friend should put into your hands a sum of money, in trust, to keep and use for his benefit as an honest man or woman, you would feel under an obligation to be faithful to this trust. If you began to regard it as your own, to have and hold and spend for your own purposes, would it not tend to correct your mistake of purpose and action to have him take a part or the whole of the sum from your hands?

Is it not so with our children? We are prone to regard them as our own absolutely, to use and direct as we please. How few regard it as the end of providing food and clothing, and a home, and education for their children, that they may be trained up for Heaven! How little is done directly for this purpose!

When, therefore, the Lord comes and takes a child from our care and transfers it to the care of the angels, He reminds us in the most forcible way that it is His child, that those who remain with us are His children, and that we must be diligent and faithful in educating them for His service. The whole effect, if rightly viewed, would help us to see the relation which our children bear to us, and to the Lord, in a true light, and to discharge the trust committed to us in a more faithful manner.

But again: The tendency of affliction is to soften our natures, and to break the force of our natural desires. This is especially the case with the removal of children, and those who are dear to us, to the other life. They are bound to us by the tenderest ties. It is a provision of the Lord's mercy, that our life should begin in a sphere of love. Parental affection is a real bond between the parent and child. The mother's life and the father's life brood over it, and warm it,

and receive warmth from the Lord in communicating it. Our children are a part of ourselves, of our own being, and when they are taken from us, what a bottomless gulf is left in the heart! How lonely the house is without their presence! How silent without the music of their voices! The vacant chair occupies more space in our thoughts and affections than all the others. An empty cradle makes the whole house empty. The light that has faded from the bright eye makes the whole house dark, and our own souls also. Every earthly good appears in dimmer light, and becomes less precious. What is the use of wealth, if there is no beloved one on whom to lavish it? What is the use of home, if the dear ones have fled? It is a deserted nest. Our hold upon every earthly good is relaxed. We see that it cannot be relied upon. We distrust it. The foundations are loosened. How many a father and mother have felt the solid earth reeling under their feet when the body of their beautiful, their beloved one, was being committed to it. So the all merciful Lord cuts the chords of our natural affections which anchor us to the earth, and lets us drift out upon the ocean of life, that He may bring us into the great currents of His love and wisdom, and draw us towards our real home in Heaven.

The natural man is hard and cold. He must be subdued, and softened. He must be put into the alembic of suffering, and purified as silver in a potter's vessel. He must be melted in the furnace of affliction, as we melt iron, to purify it from dross, and cast it into the moulds of more beautiful forms. This is one important use of all sorrow and affliction. It does *not give us anything*, but it prepares us to receive

something better than earth can give. As in some optical exhibitions they darken the room, that we may see more clearly the particular thing exhibited, so the removal of our children puts out the light of earth, that the Lord may reveal to us more clearly the beauty and glory of Heaven.

But this softening of the natural mind in the furnace of affliction is not a punishment. It is not uncommon for parents to regard their bereavements as an evidence of the Divine displeasure, and a punishment for sin, and this is the most terrible ingredient in the bitter cup of sorrow. The idea that the Lord has lifted His right hand to smite our little ones, who are innocent of all blame, that He may, through their sufferings, pierce our own hearts with the keenest pangs, is too horrible to be entertained. No! The mother would sooner put out the eyes of the babe lying upon her breast, or pierce its tender and sensitive flesh with needles, to punish the husband and father she loves better than her own life. The Lord's love is infinite. He cannot inflict a pang upon one of His children. He cannot suffer a shadow to fall upon one of them, unless it is for the purpose of preventing a deeper shadow, or of preparing the way for a greater light. The Lord's love for the father and mother and child infinitely surpasses their love for each other, and His desire to shelter them from every storm, and confer upon them the highest blessings, is as great as His love. He loosens our hold upon earth that He may draw us by the chords of love to Heaven.

A little child grows to our very hearts. The sensitive and strong tendrils of our affections entwine into the nature of the child. The heart anchors to it.

The image of the beloved one is in all our thoughts. The whole nature unconsciously and constantly turns to it. It is our most precious treasure, our idol often, and our heart is where our treasure is. Now the Lord transfers our treasure to Heaven. Will not the natural effect be to lead us to look to Heaven where our treasure is? Our thought must follow the little ones who so recently were folded to our own hearts. It cannot be otherwise.

Those who have no knowledge of the other world, can, indeed, only look into vacuity. All upon the other side of the veil is a blank to them, and the best and most they can do is to submit, and trust in the Lord.

Some are stimulated to inquire if there is not some light shining from the other world through the dark valley, and happily for humanity, there is a growing conviction that there is such light. Many now inquire, and get light and comfort, who formerly would have borne their sorrow in hopeless silence. This is a great gain. Many look up through their tears and find light which grows brighter as they look, and they follow it.

We are not only on the earth in this life, we are *in* the earth. We are in the material body. Material substances are above us and around us. We breathe a material atmosphere. We see by material light. We live on material food. With material hands we touch and handle only material things. Compared with those who dwell in the spiritual world, we are like miners born underground, in some dark mine, with only dim smoky lamps for their light. The rock beneath them is their earth, the rock above them is *their sky*, and their hanging lamps their sun and moon.

and stars. The chambers and galleries are their countries and their homes.

It is said that children have been born in the vast mines in the old world, and have grown up there, without having ever seen the world above them. Suppose some friend who dearly loved these parents and children, and earnestly desired to lead them out of their gloomy abode into the light and beauty of this world, should send letters and messengers to them to persuade them to give up their narrow dungeons and come up into the light. Failing in his purpose, he goes himself. He sets forth in as forcible a manner as possible the advantages of this change of place. He describes the sun, and the blue sky, and broad landscapes, lovely with trees and streams and grass and flowers; pictures the clouds and the fresh air, and the beautiful homes, filled with many comforts and luxuries.

But their minds are dwarfed, and their conceptions of what he describes are dim and vague. Their home is in the mine. Their associations are all there. Their thoughts are bounded by its narrow walls. Why should they wander off into the vague and boundless unknown? Finding it impossible to persuade them to leave their dismal abode, he snatches an infant from the mother's arms, and rushes away towards the upper world. Now the parents, frantic with grief, follow him to recover their lost treasure. In seizing the child, he has seized the parents by the heart. He has taken their treasure, and they follow him through many a dark and winding way, but finally lose all trace of him, and return to their desolate and rocky home. How they mourn! How involun-

tarily and constantly their hearts and thoughts turn to their child, and to him who has bereaved them. How could he be so cruel as to take away their richest treasure!

When the first storm of anger is over, and they can look more calmly upon their great bereavement, they begin to read his words. They reflect upon what he has said about the upper world. He must have taken their child there, and they resolve to follow him, to search every avenue, and to leave no means untried to discover the dwelling and regain the lost.

So the Lord sometimes takes our children, out of the earth, out of the darkness and misery of material conditions, and carries them into the brightness and beauty of the spiritual world, that He may lead us by our affections to follow them; that we may learn those truths, and follow in those paths which lead to the peace and blessedness of Heaven. His motive is love to us and to our children, and His method the one which will the most effectually serve His purpose.

We should have no thought or care for the other life, if we never saw or heard of any one passing into it. It is difficult, even now, when we see the funeral procession every day, and are ourselves often called upon to follow the earthly remains of those who are dear to us, to the tomb. But if they remained for ever about us, our thoughts and affections would never rise above the earth. Why should they? There would be no motive. Our interests are all here.

But as one after another passes away from the circle of home, they carry with them something of our thought and affection. The balance of influence in favour of the spiritual world begins to preponderate.

With every departure some weight is transferred from one scale to the other ; the hold of earth upon us weakens, and the bonds of spiritual life grow stronger. Have you not found it so in your own experience? Does not the other life draw near, and become more real, and this life seem to become more unsubstantial and to fade away, as friend after friend departs?

I doubt not it is so. And so far as it is, and you are led to think rightly about it, the removal of those who are dear to you is a substantial good. The spiritual world is the real world. It is the home of all the past generations. It will soon be our home. We shall all remove to it in a few days, and we shall dwell in it for ever. Any instruction or discipline, any sorrow or joy, which leads us to think of it and to prepare for it, must be a blessing.

But it is only in appearance that our children are taken from us. In reality it is not so. They are more fully given to us. They are taken from our natural senses to be more fully given to us as spiritual beings. Bodily presence is not real presence. Bodily nearness is not spiritual nearness. Those who dwell in the same house and sit at the same table, who live and labour together, may be more remote than those who live on the opposite side of the globe. It is similarity of thought and affection which bring people really together, and bind them to each other.

Two material bodies intervene between those who are the nearest to each other in this world. The mother can only reach her child, through her own material body and that of the child's. When the material body of either is removed, an obstruction is removed. When a good mother passes into the other

life, she comes nearer to her children who remain in this, and can do more for their spiritual good than she could have done while on the earth. By virtue of the same law, a child—a little infant—has more influence upon its natural parents, and brothers, and sisters, than it could have in this world. It has passed from a lower to a higher plane of their being. It comes nearer their hearts, and touches the more interior springs of action. Its influence tends to purify the fountain of life. A child in the other life becomes a new avenue of communication between us and the angels, and a new bond of conjunction with them. In this way their life and the Divine life is poured more fully into our hearts.

The spiritual world, we must remember, is not situated at some immeasurable distance from us in space. It is here. It is around us. We are in it now, as to our spirits. All our ability to know and love, to think and act, is from that world, and through the medium of those who dwell in it. The homes of the angels with whom our sanctified children dwell may be around our firesides. We are living in the midst of spiritual beings all the time, and if our spiritual sight was opened we should see them.

In the many instances of the opening of the spiritual sight recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, the persons whose sight was opened remained in this world. John was in the isle of Patmos as to his body, while he was in Heaven as to his spirit, and saw the Lord and the many wonderful things recorded in the Revelation. Our children; therefore, do not go away from us in space when they die. They remain as near to us as they are drawn by affection, and to the extent of

their influence they enter into our affections for all that is good and true, and vivify them with the innocence of Heaven.

I think we have good reason, also, for believing that they awaken a lively interest in the minds of the angels to whose care they are committed, for their parents and friends in this world.

If an infant was committed to your care by Divine appointment, would it not lead you to desire to know something of its parents. If the child had been taken from the parents without their consent, as a child is taken by death, or without their knowledge, would not your sympathies be awakened for the poor suffering father and mother? Would you not feel that you had a special call to do all in your power to comfort them, and if you could not restore the child to them, to do your best to prepare them to be restored to the child?

What love for the bereaved and sorrowing parents must these little ones who have gone from our homes to the homes of the angels awaken in their hearts! How ardently they must desire to comfort and support us in our affliction! How efficiently they will do it, so far as we open our hearts to their gentle and pure affections! They lift us up from the earth; they wipe the tears of sorrow from our eyes; they pour the balm of heavenly consolation into the torn and bleeding heart; they draw us, if we will yield to their loving influence, by heavenly attractions towards themselves and the Lord. They enlist others in our favour, and make us a centre of interest to all in the heavens who can approach us.

It is true that this influence comes very faintly to

our consciousness while we are in this life. It is a repose and elevation of the affections; it is a clearer thought concerning the Lord and the other life, it is a parting of the clouds for a moment; it is a firmer purpose to shun evils; to live a more unselfish and less worldly life; to do more for others; to be gentler, and kinder, and truer, and more devoted to the living. As we give the angels opportunity, they insinuate the germs of heavenly good into our hearts, and as we yield to their guidance, they lead us to Heaven and the Lord. They touch the springs of our natures; they put their gentle hands on the helm of life; they make the lion and the lamb in our natures to lie down together, and the little child whom we mourned as lost, leads them.

Blessed innocents! Treasures laid up in Heaven! Riches past our capacity to estimate! Loving bonds between us and the angels! They are not lost to us. The Lord has not taken them from us. He has suffered the outward links of the chain which bound them to us to fall away, that the inward might be strengthened. He has brought them nearer to us, and He uses their tender natures as a way in which He can approach us more nearly, and gain a more powerful hold upon us. He blessed us in giving them to us. He blessed us in taking them from our natural sight, and He preserves them a living source of blessing to us now and for evermore. If we could see the whole effect upon us of their birth and translation, as He sees it, and has provided it, we should say with our hearts as well as with our lips, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

CHAPTER V.

THE DISCIPLINE OF OUR CHILDREN UPON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN EQUALLY FAVOURABLE TO THEIR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND HAPPINESS.

THE doctrines of the New Church give us the most comforting assurance of the happiness of our children in heaven. They teach us that they are kindly and tenderly received by the angels, and that all their infantile wants are fully provided for. Their lot seems fortunate, both in what they escape and in what they gain. They are released from the incumbrances and hindrances of a material body; they are free from all want—from hunger, and cold, and disease, and pain, and the limitations of time and space, and privation in every form. They are introduced into beautiful homes, where they find everything which can in any way contribute to their comfort and culture and happiness. They have teachers who know how to touch the secret springs of their natures; to anticipate their wants; to repress in the gentlest manner, and to direct the unfolding of all their affections and intellectual faculties in order and harmony.

When we see this, and furthermore when we find *that these doctrines concerning the condition of our children who have passed into the other life, are based*

upon the Word of God and the immutable laws of Divine order, as we do when we examine them fully; and when we compare their condition with even the most favoured children in this life, but more especially with the vast multitude of children who are born into the sphere of every evil influence, and who must necessarily grow up in ignorance, our first thought is, How fortunate it would be for all children to be taken from earth to Heaven!

But this conclusion is drawn from only a partial view of the subject. Removal from the labours and trials and temptations and sufferings of earth in infancy and childhood is attended with loss as well as gain. The hard conditions and sore trials of earth have their compensations, as well as the peace and blissful activities of Heaven. A little examination of the nature of the human mind, and of the relations of this life to the life after death, will enable us to see that it is so.

We cannot doubt that the Lord has arranged the order and methods and proportions of our life in a manner which is best adapted to the full and harmonious development of all our faculties, in time and in eternity. Every step in life is ordered with reference to the one which succeeds it. It has its beginning, its culmination, and its end. One step grows out of another and is based upon it. There is "first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear." In the production of fruit the leaf is an instrument in forming the blossom, and the blossom in its turn is an instrument in forming the fruit. So it is with all spiritual growth.

Our life in the material body is one step in existence. In a true order of life it would have its begin-

ning, its culmination, and its end. It must necessarily have some relation to our life after we leave the body. We are in our material bodies as the bird is in the egg. In a true order of creation the bird must attain a certain degree of development before it is born into this world. While it is true that its condition after it is hatched is vastly superior when considered in itself to its state of imprisonment in the shell, yet it is essential to its perfection as a bird that it should continue in the shell until it has fully completed that stage of its existence. To anticipate it by any violence would be in some respects an injury to its perfection. It would never attain the strength or fulness of development. The eagle could never soar so high, or be so keen of sight and swift of wing. Some beauty of colour and richness of song would be wanting to every one prematurely forced into a new state of life.

The same law applies to man. He is in his shell in this life. As to his spirit, which constitutes his identity and personality as a human being, he is in embryo, in the womb of the material body. His spiritual organization is effected in it, and without doubt it is in the best possible conditions to have that work well done, for these conditions are provided and determined by Infinite Wisdom, and by that Omniscience which sees the end from the beginning. Our life in this world is the basis for the superstructure of our whole being. It must of necessity follow that it is best to have that basis well laid, and that this cannot be done without following out and completing the order of the Divine providence with reference to our work.

While, therefore, it is true that the spiritual world is *ineffably* superior to this in substance, in form, in

beauty, in variety, and in adaptation to spiritual beings; while it is true that there infants almost immediately begin to walk and speak, and their development in every respect is much more rapid than it can be here, yet it does not follow that, when all things are considered, it is a positive gain over what they would have attained by the slower and more difficult processes of earth. There is a kind of work which can be done better in this world than in the spiritual world. There is a work, which is essential to the complete development of all our faculties, and full attainment of our highest good, which can be done only in this world. To gain complete control over humanity, to become the last as well as the first, it was necessary that our Lord should assume a human nature, and be born into natural conditions. So man lays the foundation of his life here. He does a work which cannot be done in the other life. He works in many respects in darkness and silence; he works blindly and under rough conditions. But these conditions are essential to the kind of work. The most skilful artist cannot make delicate and beautiful work out of metals full of dross. They must be put into the furnace. Nor can we look for delicate handling and brilliant polish in the forge. But in those fires, and under the force of tremendous blows, the dross is separated from the pure metal, and it is brought into a state to receive the highest polish, and be wrought into the most beautiful and useful forms. So it is with our life.


An infant will always remain an infant, in some respects, in the other life. It will grow up into womanhood or manhood. It will gain knowledge and strength *and wisdom*, but it will retain something of the tender-

portant elements of influence and interior delight in Heaven. But they will never stand alone. They will occupy, relatively, about the same position in the families and societies of Heaven that they do in the families and societies of earth. They may be to the whole body of Heaven what the nervous fluid or the more delicate membranes are to the material body, absolutely necessary to its perfection, but dependent upon others to support and guide.

Indeed, I think I see good grounds in the nature of things for the belief, that it is in accordance with the purpose of the Lord from the beginning that human beings should pass into the other life in all ages and all states of development. There are children who impress every one with the idea that they do not belong to this world, and that they will not remain long here. The impression may be true or it may not. But such is the fact. The saying,

“Whom the gods love, die young,”

has been handed down from generation to generation. There is an apparent truth in it, if we judge of the Lord's affection for us by the fact that we seem better fitted for the peace and bliss of heaven than the rough work and sore trials of earth, though in reality He loves those whom He takes early to His fold no more than those who remain late. He loves the oak as well as the mushroom.

There are natures which cannot stand opposition, as there are some constitutions which cannot stand exposure and hardship. They wither under it, and are killed by it, as tender plants are killed by frost. There are others that need opposition to bring 

natural force. They need frost and fire to subdue their hardness and roughness, and give tenderness and sweetness to their natures. They grow and ripen under influences which destroy others. It may, therefore, be according to the order of the Divine providence that some should ripen early, and some late, that there may be every variety of character in Heaven.

But if we can forget for a moment the pressure of time and space and material conditions, and regard ourselves as spiritual beings; if we look at character, at mental and spiritual state, and the laws of mental development, we can see, even in this world, how the hard labours and the sore conflicts of life are more favourable, are necessary, indeed, to the development of the highest and noblest qualities of human character. It is a universal law of the Divine order that all growth and all attainment should be gained by action. The development of our spiritual faculties is at first impeded by the opposition of the natural man. But in the end we may be gainers by it. The new man born from above has every imaginable hindrance to remove, and innumerable enemies to overcome. It is born in the midst of enemies. It is nurtured like a lamb among wolves. Its promised land is pre-occupied by powerful combinations of evils, protected by fortified cities of false principles, and entrenched in habits. Its way lies through the wilderness, where it must endure hunger and cold, and meet wily enemies, and the most formidable dangers. But under the guidance of the Divine providence, these very labours and privations and trials will be instrumental in consolidating and giving vital power to the spiritual man. This plane of the mind gains vigour by every combat. The

necessity of learning truth, and applying it in the various exigencies of our daily labour and combats against the evil and false, gives breadth and nerve to the understanding. The affections, which are the fountain of courage—of heart-power—get their development by this exercise; gain vital energy. They may not expand so much as they would if they met with no opposition, but they become more firmly knit, and more intimately united with the understanding. The spiritual fibre becomes firmer, and more compact, like the fibre of those woods which grow upon open hill-sides, where they are rocked by every storm, and get the full blaze of every sun. They are like the muscles of the well-trained athlete, clean and compact and elastic, and capable of any strain.

With all this strength, there is a tenderness which is not weakness, a gentleness which is the product of power penetrated by love. Such natures are large, not by dilution and diffusion, but by concentration. They are equal to emergencies. They have opinions. They cannot only affirm, but they can give reasons. They not only have faith, but knowledge. They can stand alone, and walk alone. You can build upon them as upon a rock.

To whom would you go for sympathy in some great sorrow? To one who had never suffered? No. Rather to those who had passed through the hottest fires in the furnace of affliction, and had come out tender and strong and pure from it. To whom would you go for advice in any great exigency? To one who had met with no difficulties? who had sailed only in calm weather with fair winds? No. You would seek those who have had experience, who had been in

the same perils, and knew the danger and the way to avoid or to overcome it.

We get this spiritual discipline in this life. Our being gets root, and the more it is rocked and buffeted by storms the deeper it takes root. It sends them down into the earth of the natural mind, and pushes them out in every direction.

A human being who has not laboured and grown weary, who has not suffered and despaired, is not half a man. His faculties are only in the gristle. They have no temper. They will not hold an edge. There are great compensations for the labours and trials of this short life. We think them hard to bear, and they are grievous. But when they grow out of the conflict between good and evil in the mind, they are rich in their rewards. They give a tone and temper to the soul which can be acquired in no other way. They lay the foundation for a superstructure of life which will remain firmer than the hills, and which will rise above the level of those who have known no labour, no conflict, and no sorrow. The Lord's mercy is in human labour, in the darkness of our darkest night, and in the hottest fires of our afflictions. When we have enjoyed the blessedness of Heaven for millions of years, if we could see the bearing of our sorest conflicts and heaviest burdens upon our future good, we would come back, if it was possible, and we could see it to be necessary to the attainment of the good which grows out of them; we would lay aside our glory and put down the cup of our joys, and take upon ourselves the burden, and the yoke, and the fear, and go through the wilderness once more, and suffer its hunger and its thirst and its defeats.

No. When we think of the happiness of our little ones in Heaven, how safe they are, how free from the sore trials of earth, how rapidly they are advancing from joy to joy; when we compare their lot with that of our children who remain upon the earth, we need not envy them; we need not pity those whose path for many years must be steep and difficult, whose tender feet must bleed, and whose hearts must be pierced with many sorrows.

If we do our duty by them, they will yet outstrip those who have gone before. They will find the most ample compensation for every good deed done, for every battle fought and victory won.

But there is another good gained by a long and useful life in this world, which grows out of the changed relations of spiritual beings to the world without them. In the spiritual world all the scenery and all the objects of every kind which surround a person or a society, which the man or woman can see or hear or perceive by any sense, is a representative of the thoughts and affections within. The outward world answers to the inward world. The outward world is the effect of the thoughts and forms of the angels.

This life is the seed-time of principles. What we make our own here become the germs of all that will be our own through eternity. The typical forms of all that will become objective to us are stored up in the mind. The soul gets its colour here, and the Divine light which streams through it in the other life will receive its hue from the peculiar quality of the soul.

The spiritual law according to which this takes place is the same as the one with which we are all familiar in this life. Every one has his own mental scenery.

Every one lives in a world more or less different from the world which surrounds him. He has a more beautiful house in his mind than the material house in which he dwells. He does nobler or baser deeds in thought than in act. His mental world is determined by his knowledge and character, by the images in his mind, and the love of good or evil in his heart. Any one who will reflect a moment upon the workings of his own mind, will see that it is so. This law is not annulled or changed when we go into the other world. It is carried into fuller effect. Here we may be in a better or worse condition externally than we are mentally. John Bunyan in his cell was a pilgrim on his way to the Heavenly City, meeting adventures, and fighting battles, and passing through scenes more various than any knight-errant of old, or pilgrim to the Holy Land. On the other hand, those who dwell in palaces, and are surrounded with all the beauty and splendour which wealth and art can produce, may live in a mental and moral world foul with vile lusts, and terrible with infernal purposes. But in the other life the outward world will correspond to the inward. It will be no better and no worse. An angel could not wear a torn, filthy, and unbecoming garment. A devil could not live in the pure, shining robes of the angels. It would be a torment to him.

An infant has not stored up any images or states of mind; it has not formed any character in this world, and this must have some effect upon its condition there. The minds of children must be in some degree transparent and negative. They will be supplied with everything that can in any way contribute to their happiness. But it will not be so fully their own. It

will be the creation of others around them. Like fluids, they will assume the forms of other vessels, rather than give form to them.

They can never rise so high, because they have not so deep a root. They can never extend their influence so widely. Their affections cannot assume such variety of form, their sympathies cannot be so wide and deep. Their natures cannot be so large and capacious for the reception of the Divine life. If they are saved from much labour and suffering, and many dangers, they also lose the good which is gained by them. If they enter early into the joys of the heavenly state, they miss that fulness of preparation which is essential to the largest and most complete development of our spiritual nature.

While, therefore, we have so much to comfort us in the removal of our children to the other life, we have equal cause to rejoice in the possession of those who remain, and the most powerful motives to do all in our power to protect them from evil, to instruct them in the truth, and to initiate them into the practice of a heavenly life, that when they throw aside their earthly garments, they may be in a state to join those who have gone before.



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